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# MAHATMA

## LIFE OF MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

HE stopped at the thresholds of the huts of the thousands of dispossessed, dressed like one of their own. He spoke to them in their own language. Here was living truth at last, and not only quotations from books. For this reason the Mahatma, the name given to him by the people of India, is his real name. Who else has felt like him that all Indians are his own flesh and blood? When love came to the door of India, that door was opened wide. At Gandhi's call India blossomed forth to new greatness, just as once before, in earlier times, when Buddha proclaimed the truth of fellow-feeling and compassion among all living creatures.

Rabindranath Tagore

एष देवो विश्वकर्मा महात्मा
सदा जनानां हृदये सन्निविष्टः ।
हृदा मनीषा मनसाऽभिक्लृप्तो
य एतद् विदुरमृतास्ते भवन्ति ॥

— श्वेताश्वतरोपनिषद्

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# MAHATMA

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# MAHATMA

## LIFE OF MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

*He is the One Luminous, Creator of All, Mahatma,*
*Always in the hearts of the people enshrined,*
*Revealed through Love, Intuition, and Thought,*
*Whoever knows Him, Immortal becomes.*

TAMIL NAD GRAMA SEVAK VIDYALAYAM
T. KALLUPPATTY POST,
MADURA DT.

*By*

D. G. TENDULKAR

*Illustrations collected and arranged by*

VITHALBHAI K. JHAVERI

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## *From The Publishers*

THE FIRST volume depicted the formative period of the national movement and Gandhiji's emergence in the field of Indian politics. This volume opens with the new epoch or what is called the Gandhian era. It ends with the passing of resolution on Complete Independence at the Lahore session of the Congress. The eight volumes, in fact, depict the Gandhian era with its different phases, leading to India's freedom.

In this arduous task we have had co-operation from several friends and sympathizers, individual acknowledgements to whom are already made in the introduction to the first volume.

Gandhiji gave his graceful co-operation and thus made our work smoother. Jawaharlal Nehru has taken a keen interest in the publication and continues to give encouragement. R. R. Diwakar has helped us from the very beginning and he has made possible its publication in the present form.

In seeing the proofs, preparing the glossary and index, Anu Bandyopadhyaya has given her ample co-operation.

Sumati Morarjee has lent us her unique collection of illustrations for embellishing the biography.

The workers of the Times of India Press have given us their co-operation, although the main conception and the smallest details with regard to the production are ours. We have been struggling against heavy odds to keep up to a high standard, but we have not been able to achieve all what we hoped for.

The first two volumes have been published in 1951. We hope to bring out the subsequent volumes at an interval of about ten weeks each.

Although the greatest care is taken in the preparation of this biography, we should be thankful if readers point out any mistakes they may come across in these volumes. We would be also glad if they send us any documentary or pictorial material bearing on Gandhiji's life for reproduction in subsequent volumes.

D. G. Tendulkar
Vithalbhai K. Jhaveri

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" In printing this primer good paper, bold type and suitable illustrations, *e.g.*, charkha, must be used. . . Before starting to study it, the child must know spinning, the alphabets and numerals. This primer is written in the form of a dialogue between the child and mother. I hope that the mother in India will, in future, be her child's teacher."

First four lessons from the primer : Early rising at four in the morning, brushing of teeth with *neem* stick and cleaning of mouth, getting ready for prayers with clean body and composed mind, and chanting of prayers. 144

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*Jacket and fly-leaf designed by Vithalbhai K. Jhaveri*

# MAHATMA

## *New Epoch*

1920

August 1, 1920. Gandhi gave the signal for the non-co-operation campaign by a letter to Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, surrendering his decorations and titles:

"It is not without a pang that I return the Kaisar-i-Hind gold medal granted to me by your predecessor for my humanitarian work in South Africa, the Zulu War medal granted in South Africa for my services as officer in charge of the Indian Volunteer Ambulance Corps in 1906 and the Boer War medal for my services as assistant superintendent of the Indian Volunteer Stretcher Bearer Corps during the Boer War of 1899-1900. I venture to return these medals in pursuance of the scheme of non-co-operation inaugurated today in connection with the Khilafat movement. Valuable as these honours have been to me, I cannot wear them with an easy conscience so long as my Musalman countrymen have to labour under a wrong done to their religious sentiment. Events that have happened during the past month have confirmed me in the opinion that the Imperial Government have acted in the Khilafat matter in an unscrupulous, immoral and unjust manner and have been moving from wrong to wrong in order to defend their immorality. I can retain neither respect nor affection for such a Government.

"The attitude of the Imperial and Your Excellency's Governments on the Punjab question has given me additional cause for grave dissatisfaction. I had the honour, as Your Excellency is aware, as one of the Congress commissioners, to investigate the causes of the disorders in the Punjab during April 1919. And it is my deliberate conviction that Sir Michael O'Dwyer was totally unfit to hold the office of Lt.-Governor of the Punjab, that his policy was primarily responsible for infuriating the mob at Amritsar. No doubt the mob excesses were unpardonable; incendiarism, murder of five innocent Englishmen and the cowardly assault on Miss Sherwood were

most deplorable and uncalled for. But the punitive measures taken by General Dyer, Col. Frank Johnson, Col. O'Brien, Mr. Bosworth Smith, Rai Shri Ram Sud, Mr. Malik Khan and other officers were out of all proportion to the crime of the people and amounted to wanton cruelty and inhumanity almost unparalleled in modern times. Your Excellency's light-hearted treatment of the official crime, your exoneration of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, Mr. Montagu's despatch and above all the shameful ignorance of the Punjab events and callous disregard of the feelings of Indians betrayed by the House of Lords, have filled me with the gravest misgivings regarding the future of the empire, have estranged me completely from the present Government and have disabled me from tendering, as I have hitherto whole-heartedly tendered, my loyal co-operation.

"In my humble opinion the ordinary method of agitating by way of petitions, deputations and the like is no remedy for moving to repentance a Government so hopelessly indifferent to the welfare of its charge as the Government of India has proved to be. In the European countries, condonation of such grievous wrongs as the Khilafat and the Punjab would have resulted in a bloody revolution by the people. They would have resisted at all costs national emasculation such as the said wrongs imply. But half of India is too weak to offer violent resistance and the other half is unwilling to do so. I have, therefore, ventured to suggest the remedy of non-co-operation which enables those who wish to dissociate themselves from the Government and which, if it is unattended by violence, undertaken in an ordered manner, must compel it to retrace its steps and undo the wrongs committed. But whilst I shall pursue the policy of non-co-operation in so far as I can carry the people with me, I shall not lose hope that you will yet see your way to do justice. I, therefore, respectfully ask Your Excellency to summon a conference of the recognized leaders of the people and in consultation with them find a way that would placate the Musalmans and do reparation to the unhappy Punjab."

Old Congress leaders like Malaviya were not agreeable to Gandhi launching the movement. "I would do much and give much to please Pandit Malaviyaji," said Gandhi, "but the higher duty requires me not to turn from the course mapped out by the Non-co-operation Committee. There are moments in your life when you must act, even though you cannot carry your best friends with you. The 'still

small voice' within you must always be the final arbiter when there is a conflict of duty."

Under "The Congress and Non-co-operation", Gandhi wrote: "The reason for asking me to suspend action is that the Congress will presently meet and consider the whole question of non-co-operation and give its verdict. It would, therefore, be better (says Panditji) to await the Congress decision. In my humble opinion it is no Congressman's duty to consult the Congress before taking an action in a matter in which he has no doubts. To do otherwise may mean stagnation.

"The Congress is after all the mouthpiece of a nation. And when one has a policy or a programme which one would like to see adopted but on which one wants to cultivate public opinion, one naturally asks the Congress to discuss it and form an opinion. But when one has an unshakable faith in a particular policy or action, it would be folly to wait for the Congress pronouncement. On the contrary one must act and demonstrate its efficacy so as to command acceptance by the nation.

"My loyalty to the Congress requires me to carry out its policy when it is not contrary to my conscience. If I am in a minority, I may not pursue my policy in the name of the Congress. The decision of the Congress on any given question, therefore, does not mean that it prevents a Congressman from any action to the contrary, but if he acts, he does so at his own risk and with the knowledge that the Congress is not with him.

"Every Congressman, every public body has the right, it is sometimes their duty, to express their own opinion, act upon it even and thus anticipate the verdict of the Congress. Indeed it is the best way of serving the nation. By initiating well-thought-out policies, we furnish data for a deliberative body like the Congress to enable it to form a well-informed opinion. The Congress cannot express national opinion without any definiteness, unless at least some of us have already firm views about a particular course of conduct. If all suspended their opinion, the Congress must necessarily suspend its own also.

"There are always three classes of people in an institution. Those who have favourable views on a given policy, those who have fixed but unfavourable views on it and those who hold no fixed views. The Congress decides for this third and large group. I hold fixed

views on non-co-operation. I believe that if we are to make anything of the reforms we will have to create a clean and elevating atmosphere instead of the present foetid, unclean and the debasing atmosphere to work them in. I believe that our duty is to compel justice from the Imperial Government in regard to the Khilafat and the Punjab. In both these matters injustice is being sustained by untruth and insolence. I, therefore, consider it to be the duty of the nation to purge the Government of the uncleanliness before they can co-operate with each other. Even opposition or obstruction is possible where there is mutual respect and confidence. At the present moment the governing authority has no respect for us or our feelings. We have no faith in it. In these circumstances co-operation is a crime. Holding these strong views, I can serve the Congress and the country only by reducing them to practice and thus affording to the Congress material for forming an opposition.

"For me to suspend non-co-operation would be to prove untrue to the Musalman brethren. They have their own religious duty to perform. The Musalmans must take action now. They cannot await Congress decision. They can only expect the Congress to ratify their action and share their sorrows and their burdens. Their action cannot be delayed till the Congress has decided on a policy nor can their course be altered by an adverse decision of the Congress unless their action is otherwise found to be an error. The Khilafat is a matter of conscience with them. And in matters of conscience the law of majority has no place."

Men like Sir Narayan Chandavarkar dissuaded people from joining the non-co-operation movement. His manifesto said that "non-co-operation is deprecated by the religious tenets and traditions of our motherland, of all the religions that have saved and elevated the human race." The examples of Prahlad dissociating himself from his father, Mirabai from her husband, Bibhishan from his brutal brother, were not far-fetched for Gandhi to cite. Save for an outbreak of violence on the part of the people, whether under provocation or otherwise, he had no doubts about the salutary effects of his movement. But there too, he said: "I would rather risk violence a thousand times than risk the emasculation of a whole race."

The new way Gandhi pointed out was difficult but it captured the imagination of the people. A coward had no place under his

banner. In an article entitled "The Doctrine of the Sword", he wrote in *Young India* of August 11:

"In this age of the rule of brute force, it is almost impossible for anyone to believe that anyone else could possibly reject the law of the final supremacy of brute force. And so I receive anonymous letters advising me that I must not interfere with the progress of the non-co-operation movement even though popular violence may break out. Others come to me and assuming that secretly I must be plotting violence, inquire when the happy moment for declaring open violence is to arrive. They assure me that the English will never yield to anything but violence secret or open. Yet others, I am informed, believe that I am the most rascally person living in India because I never give out my real intention and that they have not a shadow of a doubt that I believe in violence just as much as most people do.

"Such being the hold that the doctrine of the sword has on the majority of mankind, and as success of non-co-operation depends principally on absence of violence during its pendency, and as my views in this matter affect the conduct of a large number of people, I am anxious to state them as clearly as possible.

"I do believe that, where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence. Thus, when my eldest son asked me what he should have done, had he been present when I was almost fatally assaulted in 1908, whether he should have run away and seen me killed or whether he should have used his physical force which he could and wanted to use, and defend me, I told him that it was his duty to defend me even by using violence. Hence it was that I took part in the Boer War, the so-called Zulu Rebellion and the late war. Hence also do I advocate training in arms for those who believe in the method of violence. I would rather have India resort to arms in order to defend her honour than that she should in a cowardly manner become or remain a helpless witness to her own dishonour.

"But I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment. Forgiveness adorns a soldier. But abstinence is forgiveness only when there is the power to punish; it is meaningless when it pretends to proceed from a helpless creature. A mouse hardly forgives a cat when it allows itself to be torn to pieces by her. I, therefore, appreciate the sentiment of those

who cry out for the condign punishment of General Dyer and his ilk. They would tear him to pieces, if they could. But I do not believe India to be helpless. I do not believe myself to be a helpless creature. Only I want to use India's and my strength for a better purpose.

"Let me not be misunderstood. Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will. An average Zulu is anyway more than a match for an average Englishman in bodily capacity. But he flees from an English boy, because he fears the boy's revolver or those who will use it for him. He fears death and is nerveless in spite of his burly figure. We in India may in a moment realize that one hundred thousand Englishmen need not frighten three hundred million human beings. A definite forgiveness would, therefore, mean a definite recognition of our strength. With enlightened forgiveness must come a mighty wave of strength in us, which would make it impossible for a Dyer and a Frank Johnson to heap affront on India's devoted head. It matters little to me that for the moment I do not drive my point home. We feel too downtrodden not to be angry and revengeful. But I must not refrain from saying that India can gain more by waiving the right of punishment. We have better work to do, a better mission to deliver to the world.

"I am not a visionary. I claim to be a practical idealist. Religion of non-violence is not meant merely for the *rishis* and saints. It is meant for the common people as well. Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute, and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law, to the strength of the spirit.

"I have ventured to place before India the ancient law of self-sacrifice. For satyagraha and its offshoots, non-co-operation and civil resistance, are nothing but new names for the law of suffering. The *rishis*, who discovered the law of non-violence in the midst of violence, were greater geniuses than Newton. They were themselves greater warriors than Wellington. Having themselves known the use of arms, they realized their uselessness, and taught a weary world that its salvation lay not through violence but through non-violence.

"Non-violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering. It does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer, but it means putting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant.

Working under this law of our being, it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire to save his honour, his religion, his soul, and lay the foundation for that empire's fall or its regeneration.

"And so I am not pleading for India to practise non-violence because it is weak. I want her to practise non-violence being conscious of her strength and power. No training in arms is required for realization of her strength. We seem to need it, because we seem to think that we are but a lump of flesh. I want to recognize that she has a soul that cannot perish and that can rise triumphant above every physical weakness and defy the physical combination of a whole world. What is the meaning of Rama, a mere human being, with his host of monkeys, pitting himself against the insolent strength of ten-headed Ravana surrounded in supposed safety by the raging waters on all sides of Lanka? Does it not mean the conquest of physical might by spiritual strength? However, being a practical man, I do not wait till India recognizes the practicability of the spiritual life in the political world. India considers herself to be powerless and paralysed before the machine-guns, the tanks and the aeroplanes of the English. And she takes up non-co-operation out of her weakness. It must still serve the same purpose, namely, bring her delivery from the crushing weight of British injustice, if a sufficient number of people practise it.

"I isolate this non-co-operation from Sinn Feinism, for it is so conceived as to be incapable of being offered side by side with violence. I invite even the school of violence to give this peaceful non-co-operation a trial. It will not fail through its inherent weakness. It may fail because of poverty of response. Then will be the time for real danger. The high-souled men, who are unable to suffer national humiliation any longer, will want to vent their wrath. They will take to violence. So far as I know, they must perish without delivering themselves or their country from the wrong.

"If India takes up the doctrine of the sword, she may gain momentary victory. Then India will cease to be the pride of my heart. I am wedded to India because I owe my all to her. I believe absolutely that she has a mission for the world. She is not to copy Europe blindly. India's acceptance of the doctrine of the sword will be the hour of my trial. I hope I shall not be found wanting. My religion has no geographical limits. If I have a living faith in it, it will

transcend my love for India herself. My life is dedicated to the service of India through the religion of non-violence which I believe to be the root of Hinduism."

The August issues of *Young India* contained spirited writings in defence of non-co-operation. Gandhi stated his policy firmly—first things first and no dissipation of energy. His vindication of the non-co-operation movement for swaraj when untouchability still waited to be removed was: "If as a member of a slave nation I could deliver the suppressed classes from their slavery without freeing myself from my own, I would do so today. But it is an impossible task. A slave has not the freedom even to do the right thing. Hence though the *panchama* problem is as dear to me as life itself, I rest satisfied with an exclusive attention to national non-co-operation. I feel sure the greater includes the less."

Gandhi, Shaukat Ali and other leaders toured extensively through the Punjab, Sind and Madras, addressing huge meetings on the Khilafat question. Gandhi described his experiences in *Young India*: "We were travelling to Madras by the night train leaving Bangalore. We had been taking meetings at Salem during the day, motoring to Bangalore, a distance of 125 miles from Salem, taking there a meeting in drenching rain and thereafter we had to entrain. We needed a night's rest but there was none to be had. At almost every station of importance, large crowds had gathered to greet us. About midnight we reached Jolarpet junction. The train had to stop there nearly forty minutes or stopped that night all those terrible minutes. Maulana Shaukat Ali requested the crowd to disperse. But the more he argued the more they shouted 'Maulana Shaukat Ali-ki-jai', evidently thinking that the maulana could not mean what he said. They had come from twenty miles' distance, they were waiting there for some hours, they must have their satisfaction. The maulana gave up the struggle, he pretended to sleep. The adorers thereupon mounted the footboards to have a peep at the maulana. As the light in our compartment was put out, they brought in lanterns. At last I thought I would try. I rose, went to the door. It was a signal for a shout of joy. The noise tore me to pieces, I was so tired. All my appeals proved fruitless in the end. They would stop for a while to renew the noise again. I shut the windows but the crowd was not to be baffled. They tried to open the windows from outside. They must see us both. And so the tussle went on till

my son took it up. He harangued them, appealed to them for the sake of the other passengers. Peeping, however, went on to the last minute. It was all well-meant, it was all an exhibition of boundless love, yet how cruel, how unreasonable! It was a mob without a mind. There were no intelligent men of influence among them and so nobody listened to anybody."

Gandhi toured incessantly to preach revolt. He asked the people to replace the oft-shouted slogans—"Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai" and "Mahomed Ali Shaukat Ali-ki-jai"—by "Hindu-Musalman-ki-jai". He said: "There should be only three cries recognized, 'Allah-O-Akbar' to be joyously sung out by Hindus and Muslims showing that God alone was great and no other. The second should be 'Bande Mataram' or 'Bharat Mata-ki-jai'. And the third should be 'Hindu-Musalman-ki-jai' without which there was no victory for India, no true demonstration of the greatness of God." He preferred "Bande Mataram" to "Bharat Mata-ki-jai". "It would be a graceful recognition of the intellectual and emotional superiority of Bengal." He further recommended: "There should be no discordance in these cries. Immediately some one has taken up any of the three cries the rest should take it up and not attempt to yell out their favourite. Those who don't wish to join may refrain, but they should consider it a breach of etiquette to interpolate their own cries when a cry has already been raised. It would be better too, always to follow out the three cries in the order given above. Nor should the cries be incessantly shouted. We must cultivate the sense of proportion."

Never did Gandhi show himself a greater leader than during the first year of his campaign. He had to hold back the violence that lay smouldering. He considered mobocracy as the greatest danger that menaced India. He hated war, but would have it rather than the insane violence of Caliban. "If India has to achieve her freedom by violence, let it be by the disciplined violence named war," not by mob revolts. And he insisted on the necessity of maintaining strict discipline. "We must evolve order out of chaos, introduce people's law instead of mob law." He detailed rules for canalizing the torrents of meetings and demonstrations:

"One great stumbling block is that we have neglected music. Music means rhythm, order. Unfortunately in India, music has been the prerogative of the few. It has never become nationalized.

I would make compulsory a proper singing, in company, of national songs. And to that end I would have great musicians attending every Congress or conference and teaching mass music. Nothing is so easy as to train mobs, for the simple reason that they have no mind, no meditation."

Gandhi made a list of suggestions. No raw volunteers should be accepted to assist in organization of big demonstration. None but the most experienced should be at the head. Volunteers should always have a general instruction book on their persons. They should be well dispersed among the crowd and should learn flag and whistle signalling to pass instructions. National cries should be fixed and raised only at the right moment. Crowds should be prevented from entering the railway stations; they should be taught to stand back and leave a clear passage in the streets for people and carriages. Little children should never be brought out among crowds on such occasions.

Gandhi made himself the real leader of the people. While he curbed the violent elements, he stimulated the hesitating. "Never has anything been done on this earth without direct action. I rejected the word 'passive resistance' because of its insufficience." Slowly students started withdrawing from the schools, title-holders returned their honours, government servants threw away their jobs and lawyers their practices.

To the conservative minds, Gandhi's non-co-operation appeared to be a negative movement. But his non-co-operation with England presupposed the co-operation of all Indians. Gandhi succeeded in establishing this unity in India and in bridging over the differences, especially between Hindus and Muslims. He created for the first time something like a real Indian nation, all united in a uniform national sentiment. He regarded the union between Hindus and Muslims as a fundamental condition for a free India. "I never realize any distinction between a Hindu and a Muslim. Both are sons of Mother India. I know that the Hindus are a numerical majority and that they are believed to be more advanced in their knowledge and education. Accordingly, they should be glad to communicate some of their knowledge to their Muslim brethren. When Hindus and Muslims act towards each other like blood brothers, then alone can there be true unity, then only can the dawn of freedom break for India."

The Treaty of Sèvres, signed on August 10, 1920, inflamed the Indian Muslims. In reply to Gandhi's renunciation of the honours and his ultimatum, Lord Chelmsford replied in a defiant mood. He tried to kill the movement by ridicule. He called it "futile", "ill-advised", "intrinsically inane", "impractical", "visionary". He rounded off the adjectives by describing the movement as "most foolish of all foolish schemes". Gandhi replied: "Unfortunately for His Excellency the movement is likely to grow with ridicule as it is certain to flourish on repression. No vital movement can be killed except by the impatience, ignorance or laziness of its authors. A movement cannot be 'inane' that is conducted by men of action as I claim the members of the Non-co-operation Committee are. It is hardly 'impracticable', seeing that if the people respond, everyone admits that it will achieve the end. At the same time it is true that if there is no response from the people, the movement will be popularly described as 'visionary'. It is for the nation to return an effective answer by organized non-co-operation and change ridicule into respect. Ridicule is like repression. Both give place to respect when they fail to produce the intended effect."

By the end of August the Gujarat Political Conference passed the non-co-operation resolution moved by Gandhi. It was not a smooth-sailing affair. The preliminary contention raised by the opposition was that it was not competent for a provincial conference to adopt a resolution in advance of the Congress. No permission, Gandhi said, was needed to try to enhance the prestige of the parent institution, provided one did it at one's own risk.

The proposed departure of the Congress from the traditional, constitutional path was considered an issue big enough for a Special Congress, and the special session which had been already decided upon was held at Calcutta on September 4–9. It was convened to consider the recommendations of the Hunter Committee, the Treaty of Sèvres, and non-co-operation. There was a huge gathering of 20,000 persons including 5,000 delegates representing all provinces. Muslim delegates attended the session in large numbers. Lajpat Rai, who had recently returned from America, was elected to preside over the momentous session.

The draft of the non-co-operation resolution was prepared by Gandhi in the train itself at the request of Shaukat Ali. Gandhi was at sea as to who would support the non-co-operation resolution and

who would oppose it. He only saw an imposing phalanx of veteran warriors assembled for the fray—Mrs. Besant, Pandit Malaviya, Vijayaraghavachari, Motilal Nehru, C. R. Das and Jinnah.

The resolution proposed by Gandhi read as follows:

"In view of the fact that on the Khilafat question both the Indian and Imperial Governments have signally failed in their duty towards the Musalmans of India and the Prime Minister has deliberately broken his pledged word given to them, and that it is the duty of every non-Muslim Indian in every legitimate manner to assist his Musalman brother in his attempt to remove the religious calamity that has overtaken him; and in view of the fact that, in the matter of the events of April 1919, both the said Governments have grossly neglected or failed to protect the innocent people of the Punjab and punish officers guilty of unsoldierly and barbarous behaviour towards them, and have exonerated Michael O'Dwyer, who proved himself responsible for most of the official crimes and also callous to the sufferings of the people placed under his administration; and in view of the fact that the debate in the House of Commons and specially in the House of Lords betrayed a woeful lack of sympathy with the people of India and showed virtual support of the systematic terrorism and frightfulness adopted in the Punjab; and that the latest Viceregal pronouncement is proof of absence of repentance in the matters of the Khilafat and the Punjab, this Congress is of opinion that there can be no contentment in India without redress of these two wrongs, and that the only effectual means to vindicate national honour and to prevent a repetition of similar wrongs in future is the establishment of swaraj.

"This Congress is further of opinion that there is no course left open for the people of India but to approve of and adopt the policy of progressive non-violent non-co-operation, until the said wrongs are righted and swaraj is established.

"And inasmuch as a beginning should be made by the classes who have hitherto moulded and represented public opinion; and inasmuch as Government consolidates its powers through titles and honours bestowed on the people, through schools controlled by it, through its law courts and its legislative councils, and inasmuch as it is desirable, in the present state of the movement, to take the minimum risk and to call for the least sacrifice compatible with the attainment of the desired object, this Congress earnestly advises:

"(a) Surrender of titles and honorary offices and resignation of nominated posts in local bodies;

"(b) Refusal to attend Government levees, durbars and other official and semi-official functions held by government officials, or in their honour;

"(c) Gradual withdrawal of children from schools and colleges in the various provinces;

"(d) Gradual boycott of British courts by lawyers and litigants and establishment of private arbitration courts by them for the settlement of private disputes;

"(e) Refusal on the part of the military, clerical and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits for service in Mesopotamia;

"(f) Withdrawal by the candidates from election to the reformed councils and refusal on the part of the voters to vote for any candidate who may, despite the Congress advice, offer himself for election;

"(g) Boycott of foreign goods.

"And inasmuch as the non-co-operation movement has been conceived as a measure of discipline and self-sacrifice, without which no nation can make real progress, and an opportunity should be given in the first stage of non-co-operation to every man, woman and child for such discipline and self-sacrifice, this Congress advises the adoption of swadeshi in cotton piecegoods on a vast scale; and inasmuch as the existing mills of India, with indigenous capital and control, do not manufacture sufficient yarn and sufficient cloth for the requirements of the nation, and are not likely to do so for a long time to come, this Congress advises immediately stimulation of further manufacture on a large scale by means of reviving hand-spinning in every home, and hand-weaving on the part of the millions of weavers who have abandoned their ancient and honourable calling for want of encouragement."

Moving the resolution he said: "I am aware, and more than aware, of the grave responsibility that rests on my shoulders in being privileged to move this resolution before this great assembly. I am aware that my difficulties, as also yours, increase, if you are able to adopt this resolution. I am aware that the adoption of any resolution will mark a definite change in the policy which the country has hitherto adopted for the vindication of the rights that belong to it, and its honour. I am aware that a large number of our leaders who have given the time and attention to the affairs of my motherland,

which I have not been able to give, are ranged against me. They think it a duty to resist the policy of revolutionizing the Government policy at any cost. Knowing this I stand before you in fear of God and a sense of duty to put this before you for your acceptance.

"I ask you to dismiss me, for the time being, from your consideration. I have been charged of saintliness and a desire for dictatorship. I venture to say that I do not stand before you either as a saint or a candidate for dictatorship. I stand before you to present to you the results of my many years' practical experience in non-co-operation. I deny the charge that it is a new thing in the country. It has been accepted at hundreds of meetings attended by thousands of men, and has been placed in working order since the first of August by the Musalmans, and many of the things in the programme are being enforced in a more or less intense form. I ask you again to dismiss personalities in the consideration of this important question, and bring to bear calm judgement on it. But a mere acceptance of the resolution does not end the work. Every individual has to enforce the items of the resolution in so far as they apply to him. I beseech you to give me a patient hearing. I ask you neither to clap nor to hiss. I do not mind them so far as I am concerned, but clapping hinders the flow of thought, clapping and hissing hinder the process of correspondence between a speaker and his audience. You will not hiss out of the stage any single speaker. For non-co-operation is a measure of discipline and sacrifice and it demands respect for opposite views. Unless we are able to evolve a spirit of mutual toleration for diametrically opposite views, non-co-operation is an impossibility. Non-co-operation in an angry atmosphere is an impossibility. I have learnt through bitter experience the one lesson to conserve my anger, and as heat conserved is transmuted in energy, even so our anger controlled can be transmuted into a power which can move the world. To those who have been attending the Congress as brothers in arms, what can be better discipline than that, which we should exercise between ourselves?

"I am told that I have been doing nothing but wreckage and that by bringing forward the resolution, I am breaking up the political life of the country. The Congress is not a party organization. It ought to provide a platform for all shades of opinions, and a minority need not leave this organization, but may look forward to translate itself into a majority, in course of time, if its opinion commended itself to

the country. Only let no man in the name of the Congress advocate a policy which has been condemned by the Congress. And if you condemn my policy, I shall not go away from the Congress, but shall plead with you to convert the minority into a majority.

"There are no two opinions as to the wrong done to the Khilafat. The Musalmans cannot remain as honourable men and follow their Prophet if they do not vindicate their honour. The Punjab has been cruelly, brutally treated and inasmuch as one man in the Punjab was made to crawl on his belly the whole of India crawled on her belly, and if we are worthy sons and daughters of India we should be pledged to remove these wrongs. It is to remove these wrongs that the country is agitating itself. But we have not been able to bend the Government to our will. We cannot rest satisfied with a mere expression of angry feeling. You could not have heard a more passionate denunciation of the Punjab wrongs than in the pages of the presidential address. If the Congress cannot wring justice from unwilling hands how can it vindicate its existence and its honour? How can it do so if it cannot enforce repentance, before receiving single gift, however rich, from those blood-stained hands?

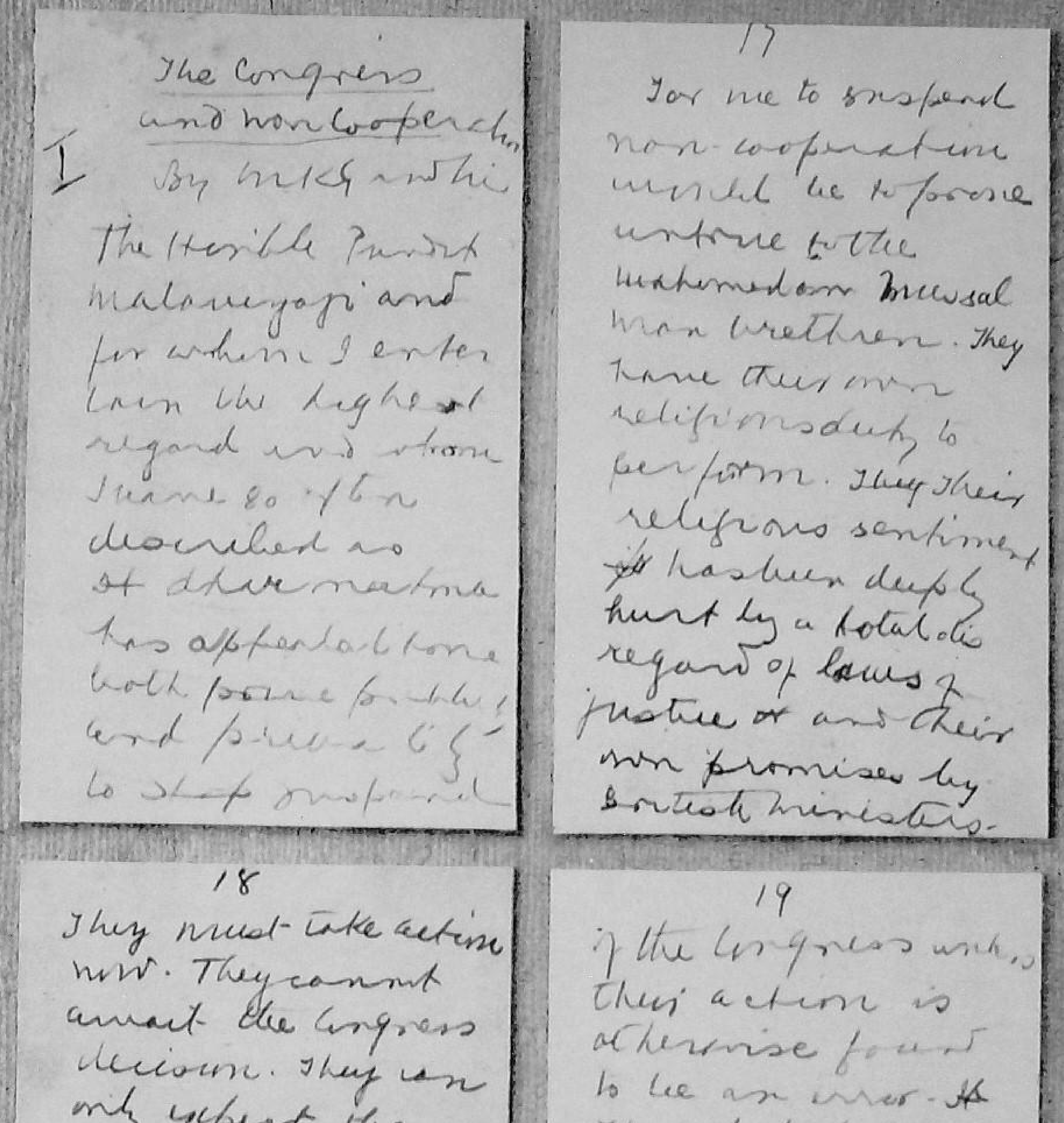
"I have placed before you my scheme of non-co-operation to achieve this end and want you to reject any other scheme, unless you have deliberately come to the conclusion that it is a better scheme than mine. If there is a sufficient response to my scheme, I make bold to reiterate my statement that you can gain swaraj in the course of an year. Not the passing of the resolution will bring swaraj, but the enforcement of the resolution from day to day in a progressive manner, due regard being had to the condition in the country. There is another remedy before the country—drawing of the sword. If that was possible India would not have listened to the gospel of non-co-operation. I want to suggest to you that even if you want to arrest injustice by methods of violence, discipline and self-sacrifice are necessary. I have not known of a war gained by a rabble, but I have known of wars gained by disciplined armies. If we want to give battle to the British Government and to the combined power of Europe we must train ourselves in discipline and self-sacrifice. I confess I have become impatient. I have seen that we deserve swaraj today, but we have not got the spirit of sacrifice. We have evolved this spirit in domestic affairs, and I ask you to extend it to other affairs. I have been travelling from one end to the other

of the country to see whether the country has evolved national spirit, whether at the altar of the nation it is ready to dedicate its riches, children, its all, if it was ready to make the initiatory sacrifice. Is the country ready? Are the title-holders ready to surrender their titles? Are parents ready to sacrifice literary education of their children for the sake of the country? The schools and colleges are a factory for turning out clerks for Government. If the parents are not ready for the sacrifice, if title-holders are not ready, swaraj is very nearly an impossibility. No nation being under another nation can accept gifts and kick at the responsibility attaching to those gifts, imposed by the conquering nation. Immediately the conquered country realized instinctively that any gift which might come to it is not for the benefit of the conquered, but for the benefit of the conqueror, that moment it should reject every form of voluntary assistance to him. These are the fundamental essentials of success in the struggle for the independence, whether within the empire or without the empire. I hold a real, substantial unity between the Hindus and the Musalmans infinitely superior to the British connection and if I had to make a choice between that unity and the British connection, I would have the first and reject the other. If I had to choose between the honour of the Punjab, anarchy, neglect of education, shutting out of all legislative activity, and British connection, I would choose the honour of the Punjab, even anarchy, shutting out of all schools, etc., without slightest hesitation.

"If you have the same feeling burning in you as in me for the honour of Islam and the Punjab, then you will unreservedly accept my resolution.

"I now come to a burning topic, the boycott of the councils. Sharpest difference of opinion existed regarding this, and if the house has to divide on it, it must divide. If it must divide, you will consider that it must divide on one issue, namely, whether swaraj has to be gained through the councils or without the councils. If we utterly distrust the British Government and we know that they are utterly unrepentant how can you believe that the councils will lead to swaraj and not tighten the British hold on India?

"I now come to swadeshi. The boycott of foreign goods is included in the resolution. You have got here, I confess, an anomaly for which I am not originally responsible. But I have consented to it. I will not go into the history of how it found a place in the resolution, of which


The Congress and Non-cooperation

I

By M. K. Gandhi

The Hon'ble Pandit Malaviyaji and for whom I entertain the highest regard and whom I have so often described as a dharmatma has appealed to me both in public and private to stop suspend

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For me to suspend non-cooperation would be to prove untrue to the Mahomedan Mussalman brethren. They have their own religious duty to perform. Their religious sentiment has been deeply hurt by a total disregard of laws of justice and their own promises by British ministers.

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They must take action now. They cannot await the Congress decision. They can only expect the Congress to ratify their action and share their sorrows and their burdens. Their action cannot be delayed till the Congress has decided on a policy. Nor can it be altered by an adverse decision

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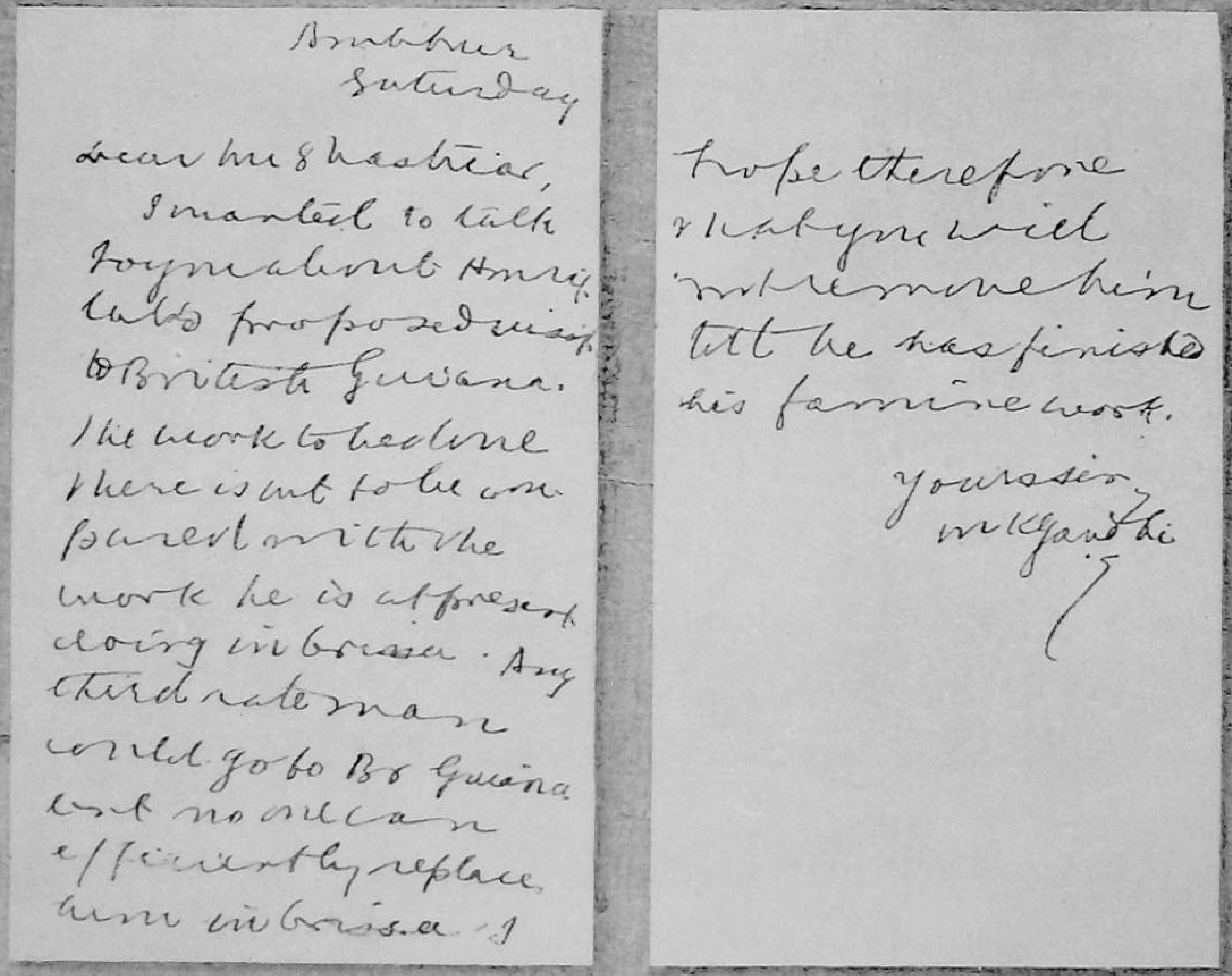
if the Congress which their action is otherwise found to be an error. The Khilafat is a matter of conscience with them. And in matters of conscience the law of majority has no place.

*Courtesy: Girdhari Kripalani*

Manuscript of Gandhi's historic article, "The Congress and Non-co-operation", in *Young India*, August 4, 1920


Bombay
Saturday

Dear Mr Shastriar,
I wanted to talk to you about Amritlal's proposed visit to British Guiana. The work to be done there is not to be compared with the work he is at present doing in Orissa. Any third rate man could go to Br Guiana but no one can efficiently replace him in Orissa. I hope therefore that you will not remove him till he has finished his famine work.

Yours sincerely
M. K. Gandhi

Gandhi's letter to Srinivasa Sastri with regard to Amritlal Thakkar (Bapa) dated 1920

Gandhi, Chancellor of the Gujarat Vidyapith, presiding over its inaugural ceremony, November 15, 1920
K. G. Mashruwala, the Registrar, is next to him *Photograph: R. M. Raval*

Tagore, Gandhi, Andrews: closed-door meeting at Jorasanko House, Calcutta, September 6, 1921

*Painting by Abanindranath Tagore* *Courtesy: Visva-Bharati*

Courtesy: S. Rupkrishna

Painting by Abanindranath Tagore, 1921

the essence is discipline and self-sacrifice. Swadeshi means permanent boycott of foreign goods. It is, therefore, a matter of redundancy. But I have taken it in, because I could not reject it as a matter of conscience. I know, however, it is a physical impossibility. So long as we have to rely on the pins and needles—figurative and literal—we cannot bring about a complete boycott of foreign goods. I do not hesitate to say this clause mars the musical harmony, if I may claim it without vanity, of the programme. I feel that those words do mar the symmetry of the programme. But I am not here for symmetry of the programme as for its workability.

"I again ask you not to be influenced by personality. Reject out of your consideration any service that I have done. Two things only I claim. Laborious industry, great thought behind any programme, and unflinching determination to bring it about. You may take only those things from me, and bring them to bear on any programme that you adopt."

The resolution was hotly opposed and Bepin Chandra Pal moved an amendment, which was supported by Das. The amendment proposed a mission to England to present the Congress demands and meanwhile to establish national schools, formulate arbitration courts and not to boycott the councils. The amended resolution would have meant in effect seeking election to the councils, probably adopting obstructive tactics there, and virtual postponement of the real struggle to the next general election. Mrs. Annie Besant, who consistently, fearlessly and frankly opposed Gandhi, had now very few adherents.

In Gandhi's resolution non-co-operation was postulated only with a view to obtaining redress of the Punjab and the Khilafat wrongs. That did not appeal to Vijayaraghavachari and Motilal Nehru. They wanted an inclusion of demand for swaraj in the resolution. Gandhi readily accepted the suggestion and incorporated demand for swaraj in his resolution. He told the Congress that if there was a sufficient response to his programme of non-co-operation, swaraj would be obtained in one year.

The voting was elaborately registered and the Congress pandal was cleared for the purpose. Lajpat Rai personally superintended the operation, which lasted for six hours. The non-co-operation resolution was passed on September 9 by 1,855 votes against 873. In the Subjects Committee all Muslim members, except Jinnah, voted

with Gandhi, while many prominent non-Muslim nationalists supported Das, who led the opposition.

Gandhi writing on his success said: "An analysis of the votes show that the country wants non-co-operation. My argument is before the country in favour of boycott of councils, schools and courts. But I would respectfully address a few words to the majority and the minority. To the majority I would say: the hour of the greatest triumph is the hour of the greatest humility. The majority has taken upon its shoulders a tremendous responsibility. Every individual voter in favour of my proposal has certainly bound himself, if he is a parent, to withdraw his children from schools or colleges subject in any way to government control. Every voter being lawyer is bound at the earliest opportunity to suspend his practice and promote the cause of settlement of disputes by arbitration. Every candidate for the councils, who has voted with the majority, has undertaken to withdraw his candidature, every such voter to refrain from voting at the elections. Every delegate voting with the majority has bound himself to stimulate hand-spinning and hand-weaving and in his own person to use hand-spun and hand-woven cloth. Everyone of the majority having accepted the principle of non-violence, self-sacrifice and discipline in regard to non-co-operation is bound to treat the minority with respect and fairness. We may not use physical or wordy violence against them. We must endeavour by intensive practice and by scrupulously honourable methods to convert it to our views. Those who voted with the minority were either weak or not ready. Some few doubted the rightness of withdrawing children from schools, for instance. But when they see schools being emptied, national schools springing into being, lawyers suspending practice and yet not starving, and the councils deserted at least by the best of nationalists, they will soon begin to believe in the programme, lose their weakness and be themselves ready to adopt it. We need not, therefore, be impatient with the minority because it does not see eye to eye with us.

"To the minority I would say, they have lost in a fair fight. Unless now, therefore, it is a matter of conscience with them, they must come forward to prosecute the programme of non-co-operation in a most vigorous manner. Those who think that the majority has grievously erred are no doubt entitled to carry on a campaign of conversion of the majority to their views. By far the largest number

in the minority have accepted the principle of private arbitration courts and national schools. They wanted only a postponement of the consideration of the boycott of councils. I venture to suggest to them that now that the majority has decided in favour of a quicker pace, the minority should accept the verdict and help to make the programme a success."

While explaining the details of the programme, Gandhi said: "I do not rely merely upon the lawyer class or highly educated men to carry out all the stages of non-co-operation. My hope is more with the masses so far as the later stages of non-co-operation are concerned."

The Special Congress adopted the non-co-operation plan as a means to attain the two objectives which it now set before itself: swaraj for India and righting the Khilafat wrongs. Nationalism and Khilafatism were organically related, as the avowed twin objects of the entire country. The Muslim League also joined in the national movement. For some years it had been holding its annual session at the same time and place as the Congress. It held a special session at Calcutta on September 7. The League President, Jinnah, said: "There is no other course open to the people except to inaugurate the policy of non-co-operation, though not necessarily the programme of Mr. Gandhi."

## *Swaraj In One Year*

1920

DURING the last quarter of 1920 Gandhi preached the triple boycott. He put forward concrete proposals for the advancement of swadeshi and thought out the smallest details: "It is possible to advance true swadeshi and earn a modest livelihood. Suppose there is a family consisting of husband, wife and two children, one of whom is ten years old and other five. If they have a capital of Rs. 500, they can manage a khaddar shop in a small way. They can hire, say in a place with a population of 20,000, a shop with dwelling rooms for Rs. 10 per month. If they sell the whole stock at ten per cent profit they can have Rs. 50 per month. They have no servants. The wife and the children in their spare time would be expected to help in keeping the shop tidy and looking after it when the husband is out. The wife and children can devote their spare time to spinning.

"In the initial stages the khaddar may not sell at the shop. In that case the husband is expected to hawk the khaddar from door to door and popularize it. He will soon find a custom for it.

"The reader must not be surprised at my suggesting ten per cent profits. The khaddar bhandars are not designed for the poorest. The use of khaddar saves at least half the cost not necessarily because the khaddar is more durable—though that it certainly is—but because its use revolutionizes our tastes. I know what saving of money its use has meant to me. Those who buy khaddar from patriotic motives can easily afford to pay ten per cent profits on khaddar. Lastly, the popularizing of khaddar means much care, devotion and labour. And the owner of a khaddar bhandar does not buy it at a wholesale shop but he must wander to get the best khaddar, he must meet the local weavers and induce them to weave hand-spun yarn. He must stimulate in his own district spinning among its women. He must come in touch with the carders and get them to card cotton. All this means intelligence, organization and great ability. A man who can

exhibit these qualities has a right to take ten per cent profits. And a swadeshi bhandar conducted on these lines becomes a true centre of swadeshi activity. I commend my remarks to the attention of the managers of swadeshi stores that are already in existence. They may not revolutionize their method at once but I have no doubt that they will advance swadeshi only to the extent that they sell khaddar."

The columns of *Young India* were open to all who had grievance against the non-co-operators. To the critics who warned the people against engaging themselves in a struggle for a swaraj such as described in *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi replied: "I do not ask India to follow today the methods prescribed in my booklet. If they could do that, they would have swaraj not in a year but in a day. But it must remain a day-dream more or less for the time being. What I am doing today is that I am giving a pardonable programme for the attainment of parliamentary swaraj."

In a series of articles in *Young India* he wrote on the hallucination of schools and colleges. About lawyers and the courts, he wrote:

"If we were not under the spell of lawyers and law courts and if there were no touts to tempt us into the quagmire of the courts and to appeal to our basest passions, we would be leading a much happier life than we do. Let those who frequent the law courts—the best of them—bear witness to the fact that the atmosphere about them is foetid. Perjured witnesses are ranged on either side, ready to sell their very souls for money or for friendship's sake. But that is not the worst of these courts. The worst is that they support the authority of a Government. They are supposed to dispense justice and are, therefore, called the palladium of a nation's liberty. But when they support the authority of an unrighteous Government they are no longer palladium of liberty, they are crushing houses to crush a nation's spirit. Such were the martial-law tribunals and summary courts in the Punjab. We had them in their nakedness. Such they are even in normal times when it is a matter of dispensing justice between a superior race and its helots. This is so all the world over. Look at the trial of an English officer and the farcical punishment he received for having tortured inoffensive Negroes at Nairobi. Has a single Englishman suffered the extreme penalty of the law or anything like it for brutal murders in India? Let no one suppose that these things would be changed when Indian judges and prosecutors take the place of Englishmen. Englishmen are not by nature corrupt.

Indians are not necessarily angels. Both succumb to their environment. There were Indian judges and Indian prosecutors during the martial-law regime, who were generally guilty of just as bad practices as the Englishmen. Those who tortured these innocent women in Amritsar were Indians, if it was a Bosworth Smith in Manianwala who insulted its women. What I am attacking is the system. I have no quarrel with the Englishmen as such. I honour individuals among them today as I did before my discovery of the unimprovableness of the existing system. If anything, Mr. Andrews and other Englishmen I could name, are nearer to me today than before. But I could not tender my homage even to him who is more than a brother to me, if he became the Viceroy of India. I would distrust his ability to remain pure if he accepted the office. He would have to administer a system that is inherently corrupt and based on the assumption of our inferiority. Satan employs comparatively moral instruments and the language of ethics, to give his aims an air of respectability.

"I have digressed a little for the purpose of showing that this Government, if it was wholly manned by Indians but worked as it now is, would be as intolerable to us as it is now. Hence it is that the knowledge of Lord Sinha's appointment to a high office fails to fill me with a glow of satisfaction. We must have absolute equality in theory and in practice and ability to do away with the British connection if we so wish.

"But to revert to the lawyers and the law courts, we cannot gain this desirable status so long as we regard with superstitious awe and wonder the so-called palaces of justice. Let not individuals who get satisfaction of their greed or revenge or their just claims be blind to the ultimate aim of these courts, the permanence of the authority of the Government which they represent. Without its law courts the Government must perish in a day. I admit that under my plan this power of subjugating the people through the courts will still remain even when every Indian lawyer has withdrawn and there are no civil suits in the law courts. But then they will cease to deceive us. They will have lost their moral prestige and, therefore, the air of respectability. It is strange but it is true that so long as we believed in the gradual transference of the power of the English to the people, appointments to high posts in the law courts were hailed as a blessing. Now that we believe that the system is incapable of being gradually mended, every such appointment by reason of its deceptiveness

must be regarded as an evil. Therefore, every lawyer suspending his practice to that extent undermines the prestige of the law courts and every suspension is a gain for the individual as for the nation.

"The economic drain that the law courts cause, has at no time been considered. And yet it is not a trifle. Every institution founded under the present system is run on a most extravagant scale. Law courts are probably the most extravagantly run. I have some knowledge of the South African. I have no hesitation in saying that the Indian is comparatively the most extravagant and bears no relation to the general economic condition of the people. The best South African lawyers—and they are lawyers of great ability—dare not charge the fees the lawyers in India do. Fifteen guineas is almost a top fee for legal opinion. Several thousand rupees have been known to have been charged in India. There is something sinful in a system under which it is possible for a lawyer to earn from fifty thousand to one lakh rupees per month. Legal practice is not—ought not to be—a speculative business. The best legal talent must be available to the poorest at reasonable rates. But we have copied and improved upon the practice of the English lawyers. Englishmen find the climate of India trying. The habits imbued under a cold and severe climate are retained in India, ample margin is kept for frequent migrations to the hills and to their island home and an equally ample margin is kept for the education of an exclusive and aristocratic type for their children. The scale of their fees is naturally, therefore, pitched very high. But India cannot bear the heavy drain. We fancy that in order to feel the equals of these English lawyers, we must charge the same killing fees that the English do. It would be a sad day for India if it has to inherit the English scale and the English tastes so utterly unsuitable to the Indian environment. Any lawyer looking at the law courts and the profession of law from the viewpoints I have ventured to suggest cannot keep coming to the conclusion that if he wants to serve the nation to the best of his ability, the first condition of service is supension of his practice. He can come to a different conclusion only if he successfully changes the statement of facts I have made."

Gandhi told the people that if his programme was scrupulously followed, swaraj should dawn within a year. On September 22 he wrote in *Young India*:

"Much laughter has been indulged in at my expense for having told the Congress audience at Calcutta that if there was sufficient

response to my programme of non-co-operation, swaraj would be attained in one year. Some have ignored my condition and laughed because of the impossibility of getting swaraj anyhow within a year. Others have spelt the 'if' in capitals and suggested that if 'ifs' were permissible in argument, any absurdity could be proved to be a possibility. My proposition, however, is based on a mathematical calculation. And I venture to say that true swaraj is a practical impossibility without fulfilment of my conditions. Swaraj means a state such that we can maintain our separate existence without the presence of the English. If it is to be a partnership, it must be a partnership at will. There can be no swaraj without our feeling and being the equals of Englishmen. Today we feel that we are dependent upon them for our internal and external security, for an armed peace between Hindus and Musalmans, for our education and for the supply of daily wants, nay, even for the settlement of our religious squabbles. The rajas are dependent upon the British for their powers and the millionaires for their millions. The British know our helplessness and Sir Thomas Holland cracks jokes legitimately at the expense of non-co-operationists. To get swaraj then is to get rid of our helplessness. The problem is no doubt stupendous even as it is for the fabled lion who having been brought up in the company of goats found it impossible to feel that he was a lion. As Tolstoy used to put it, mankind often laboured under hypnotism. Under its spell continuously we feel the feeling of helplessness. The British themselves cannot be expected to help us out of it. On the contrary, they din into our ears that we shall be fit to govern ourselves only by slow educative processes. *The Times* suggested that if we boycott the councils we shall lose the opportunity of a training in swaraj. I have no doubt that there are many who believe what *The Times* says. It even resorts to a falsehood. It audaciously says that Lord Milner's mission listened to the Egyptians only when they were ready to lift the boycott of the Egyptian Council. For me the only training in swaraj we need is the ability to defend ourselves against the whole world and to live our life in perfect freedom even though it may be full of defects. Good government is no substitute for self-government. The Afghans have a bad government but it is self-government. I envy them. The Japanese learnt the art through a sea of blood. And if we today had the power to drive out the English by superior brute force, we would be counted their superiors, and in spite of our inexperience in debating at the

council table or in holding executive offices, we would be held fit to govern ourselves. For, brute is the only test the West has hitherto recognized. The Germans were defeated not because they were necessarily in the wrong, but because the allied powers were found to possess greater brute strength. In the end, therefore, India must either learn the art of war which the British will not teach her or she must follow her own way of discipline and self-sacrifice through non-co-operation. It is as amazing as it is humiliating that one hundred thousand white men should be able to rule three hundred and fifty million Indians. They do so somewhat undoubtedly by force but more by securing our co-operation in a thousand ways and making us more and more helpless and dependent on them as time goes forward. Let us not mistake reformed councils, more law courts and even governorships for real freedom or power. They are but subtler methods of emasculation. The British cannot rule us by mere force. So they resort to all means, honourable and dishonourable, in order to retain their hold on India. They want India's billions and they want India's man-power for their imperialistic greed. If we refuse to supply them with men and money, we achieve our goal, namely, swaraj, equality, manliness.

"The cup of our humiliation was filled during the closing scenes in the Viceregal council. Mr. Sastri could not move his resolution on the Punjab. The Indian victims of Jallianwala received Rs. 1,250, the English victims of mob frenzy received lakhs. The state officials who were guilty of crimes against the people whose servants they were, were reprimanded. And the councillors were satisfied. If India were powerful, India would not have stood this addition of insult to her injury.

"I do not blame the British. If we were weak in numbers as the British are, we would perhaps have resorted to the same methods as they are employing. Terrorism and deception are weapons not of the strong but of the weak. The British are weak in numbers, we are weak in spite of our numbers. The result is that each is dragging the other down. It is common experience that Englishmen lose in character after residence in India and that Indians lose in courage and manliness by contact with Englishmen. This process of weakening is good neither for us two nations, nor for the world.

"But if we Indians take care of ourselves the English and the rest of the world would take care of themselves. Our contribution to the

progress of the world must, therefore, consist in setting our own house in order.

"Training in arms for the present is out of the question. I go a step further and believe that India has a better mission for the world. It is within her power to show that she can achieve her destiny by pure self-sacrifice, namely, self-purification. This can be done only by non-co-operation. And non-co-operation is possible only when those who commenced to co-operate begin the process of withdrawal. If we can but free ourselves from the threefold *maya* of Government-controlled schools, Government law courts and the legislative councils, and truly control our own education, regulate our disputes and be indifferent to their legislation, we are ready to govern ourselves and we are only then ready to ask the Government servants, whether civil or military, to resign and the taxpayers to suspend payment of the taxes.

"And is it such an impracticable proposition to expect parents to withdraw children from schools and colleges and establish their own institutions or to ask lawyers to suspend their own practice and devote their whole time and attention to national service against payment, where necessary, of their maintenance, or to ask the candidates for councils not to enter the legislative machinery through which all control is exercised? The movement of non-co-operation is nothing but an attempt to isolate the brute force of the British from all the trappings under which it is hidden and to show that brute force by itself cannot for one single moment hold India.

"But I frankly confess that, until the three conditions mentioned by me are fulfilled, there is no swaraj. We may not go on taking our college degrees, taking thousands of rupees monthly from clients for cases which can be finished in five minutes, and taking the keenest delight in wasting national time on the council floor and still expect to gain national self-respect.

"The last though not the least important part of the *maya* still remains to be considered. That is swadeshi. Had we not abandoned swadeshi, we need not have been in the present fallen state. If we would get rid of the economic slavery, we must manufacture our own cloth and at the present moment only by hand-spinning and hand-weaving.

"All this means discipline, self-denial, self-sacrifice, organizing ability, confidence and courage. If we show this in one year among

the classes that today count, and make public opinion, we certainly gain swaraj within one year. If I am told that even we who lead have not these qualities in us, there certainly will never be swaraj for India, but then we shall have no right to blame the English for what they are doing. Our salvation and its time are solely dependent upon us."

By October the movement passed the stage of ridicule. Gandhi wrote: "There is little doubt now that the boycott of the councils will be extensive if it is not complete. The students have become disturbed. Important institutions may any day become truly national. Motilal Nehru's great renunciation of a legal practice which was second to nobody's is by itself an event calculated to change the ridicule into respect. It ought to set people thinking seriously about their own attitude. . . Post-graduate students have given up their fellowships. Medical students have refused to appear for their final examination. The non-co-operation in these circumstances cannot be called an inane movement. Either the Government must bend to the will of the people which is being expressed in no unmistakable terms through non-co-operation, or it must attempt to crush the movement by repression."

Accompanied by the Ali brothers, Gandhi in an extensive tour of southern and northern India preached the gospel of revolt. In a moving message he demanded orientation on the part of the Indian universities. In an appeal to the parents of the Aligarh University students, he said:

"I know that the best of my friends are bewildered at many of my doings at the present moment, not the least among which is my advice to the youth of the country. I do not wonder at their bewilderment. I have undergone a complete transformation in my attitude towards the system of Government under which we are labouring. To me it is satanic even as was the system under Ravana's rule according to the scriptures of my religion. But my friends are not so convinced as I am of the supreme necessity of ending this rule, unless the system undergoes a radical change and there is definite repentance on the part of the rulers.

"I share too your concern about your boys who are learning at Aligarh. You will believe me when I tell you, that I do not wish to hurt your feelings. I am, myself, the father of four boys whom I have brought up to the best of my lights. I have been an extremely obedient son to my parents, and an equally obedient pupil to my

teachers. I know the value of filial duty. But I count duty to God above all these. In my opinion, the time has come for every young man and young woman in this country to make their choice between duty to God and duty to others. I claim to know the youth of our country in a fairly intimate manner. I know that in the majority of cases the youth of our country have the determining of their higher education in their own hands. I know cases in which parents find it difficult to wean their children from what to them appears to be the infatuation of their children about higher education. I am convinced that I am doing no violence to the feelings of parents when I address our young men and ask them to leave their schools or colleges even in spite of their parents. You will not be astonished to learn that, of the parents of hundreds of boys who have left schools or colleges, I have received only one protest and that from a government servant whose boys have left their college. The protest is based on the ground that they were not consulted before their boys decided to leave their college. In fact my advice to the boys was to discuss with their parents the question of leaving before arriving at a decision.

"I have myself appealed to thousands of parents at scores of meetings at which hardly a parent has objected to the proposition of leaving Government-controlled schools. Indeed they have with wonderful unanimity passed resolutions on non-co-operation including the item on schools. I, therefore, take leave to think that the parents of the Aligarh boys are not less convinced than the others of the necessity of withdrawing their children from schools and colleges supported or controlled by a Government that has participated in betraying the Musalmans of India and has wantonly humiliated the nation through its barbarous treatment of the Punjab.

"I hope you know that I am as eager as any that our boys' education should not be neglected. But I am certainly more eager that their education is received through clean hands. I hold it to be unmanly for us to continue to receive grants for our education from a Government which we heartily dislike. In my humble opinion that would be even dishonourable and disloyal.

"Is it not better that our children should receive their education in a free atmosphere, even though it may be given in humble cottages or in the shade of trees and under teachers who, being themselves free, would breathe into our children the spirit of freedom? I wish you could realize that the destiny of our beloved land lies not in us,

the parents, but in our children. Shall we not free them from the curse of slavery which has made us crawl on our bellies? Being weak, we may not have the strength or the will even to throw off the yoke. But shall we not have the wisdom not to leave the cursed inheritance to our children?

"They can lose nothing by pursuing their studies as free lads and lasses. Surely they do not need government university degrees. And if we could but get rid of the love of government degrees for our boys the question of finding money for their education is in reality simple. For, a week's self-denial by the nation will provide for the education of its school-going children for one year. Our existing religious and charitable Hindu and Muslim funds can support our education without even a week of self-denial. The present effort is no more than an attempt to take a referendum of our capacity to govern ourselves and to protect our religions and our honour."

He wanted the people to shake off the yoke of European culture. For more than forty years the Aligarh University had remained a Muslim university, a centre of Islamic culture in India. Khalsa College was the centre of Sikh culture, while the Hindus had the Benares University. But these institutions were dependent on the Government which gave them subvention, and he longed to see them replaced by hearths of Indian culture.

In November he founded the National University of Gujarat at Ahmedabad. Its ideal was that of a united India. Its object was to preserve the languages of India, and to use them as sources of national regeneration. Gandhi said: "A systematic study of Asiatic culture is no less essential than the study of western sciences. The vast treasures of Sanskrit and Arabic, Persian and Pali and Magadhi have to be ransacked to discover wherein lies the source of strength for the nation. The ideal is not to feed on or repeat the ancient cultures, but to build a new culture based on the traditions of the past and enriched by the experiences of later times. The ideal is a synthesis of the different cultures that have come to stay in India, that have influenced Indian life, and that, in their turn, have themselves been influenced by the spirit of the soil. This synthesis will naturally be of the swadeshi type, where each culture is assured its legitimate place, and not of the American pattern, where one dominant culture absorbs the rest and where the aim is not toward harmony, but toward an artificial and forced unity." All Indian

religions were to be taught. Hindus were to have an opportunity of studying the Koran and Muslim the Hindu shastras. The national university taught that there is nothing as untouchable in humanity. Hindustani was made compulsory, because it is the national blend of Sanskrit and Persianized Urdu. A spirit of independence was to be fostered, not only by the methods of study, but by nation-wide vocational training.

He hoped to organize gradually higher schools that would spread education throughout the towns and filter it down to the masses, "so that ere long the suicidal cleavage between the educated and the uneducated will be bridged. And as an effect of giving an industrial education to the genteel folks and a literary education to the industrial classes the unequal distribution of wealth and social discontent will be considerably checked."

The constructive programme was carried on side by side with the political agitation. Gandhi tried to win over even his opponents. An Englishman, he thought, should co-operate in non-co-operation. In *Young India* dated October 27, he earnestly appealed "To Every Englishman in India":

"Dear Friend, I wish that every Englishman will see this appeal and give thoughtful attention to it.

"Let me introduce myself to you. In my humble opinion, no Indian has co-operated with the British Government more than I have for an unbroken period of twenty-nine years of public life in the face of circumstances that might well have turned any other man into a rebel. I ask you to believe me when I tell you that my co-operation was not based on the fear of the punishments provided by your laws or any other selfish motives. It was free and voluntary co-operation based on the belief that the sum total of the activity of the British Government was for the benefit of India. I put my life in peril four times for the sake of the empire—at the time of the Boer War when I was in charge of the ambulance corps whose work was mentioned in General Buller's despatches, at the time of the Zulu revolt in Natal when I was in charge of a similar corps, at the time of the commencement of the late war when I raised an ambulance corps and as a result of the strenuous training had a severe attack of pleurisy, and lastly, in fulfilment of my promise to Lord Chelmsford at the War Conference in Delhi, I threw myself in such an active recruiting campaign in Kheda district involving long and trying

marches, that I had an attack of dysentery which proved almost fatal. I did all this in the belief that acts such as mine must gain for my country an equal status in the empire. So late as last December I pleaded hard for a trustful co-operation. I fully believed that Mr. Lloyd George would redeem his promise to the Musalmans and that the revelations of the official atrocities in the Punjab would secure full reparation for the Punjabis. But the treachery of Mr. Lloyd George and its appreciation by you and the condonation of the Punjab atrocities have completely shattered my faith in the good intentions of the present Government and the nation which is supporting it.

"But though my faith in your good intentions is gone, I recognize bravery and I know that what you will not yield to justice and reason, you will gladly yield to bravery.

"See what this empire means to India: exploitation of India's resources for the benefit of Great Britain; an ever-increasing military expenditure, and a civil service, the most expensive in the world; extravagant working of every department in disregard of India's poverty; the disarmament and consequent emasculation of a whole nation lest an armed nation might imperil the lives of a handful of you in our midst; traffic in intoxicating liquors and drugs for the purpose of sustaining a top-heavy administration; progressively repressive legislation in order to suppress an ever-growing agitation seeking to give expression to a nation's agony; degrading treatment of Indians residing in your dominions, and you have shown total disregard of our feelings by glorifying the Punjab administration and flouting the Musalman sentiment.

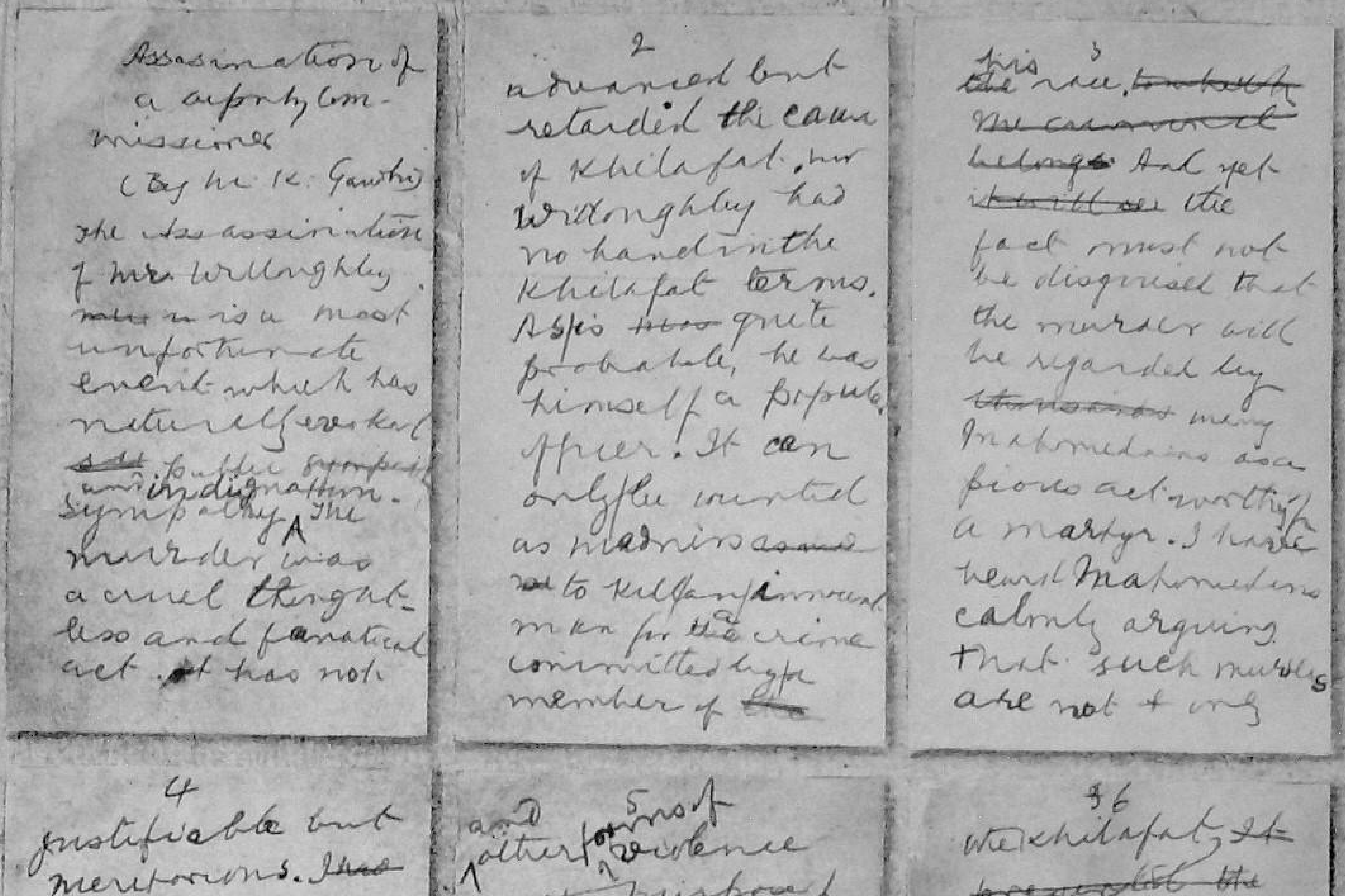
"I know that you would not mind if we could fight and wrest the sceptre from your hands. You know that we are powerless to do that, for you have ensured our incapacity to fight in open an honourable battle. Bravery on the battlefield is thus impossible for us. Bravery of the soul still remains open to us. I know you will respond to that also. I am engaged in evoking that bravery. Non-co-operation means nothing less than training in self-sacrifice. Why should we co-operate with you when we know that by your administration of this great country we are being daily enslaved in an increasing degree. This response of the people to my appeal is not due to my personality. I would like you to dismiss me, and for that matter the Ali brothers too, from your consideration. My personality will fail

to evoke any response to anti-Muslim cry if I were foolish enough to raise it, as the magic name of the Ali brothers would fail to inspire the Musalmans with enthusiasm if they were madly to raise an anti-Hindu cry. People flock in their thousands to listen to us because we represent the voice of a nation groaning under your iron heels. The Ali brothers were your friends as I was, and still am. My religion forbids me to bear any ill will towards you. I would not raise my hand against you even if I had the power. I expect to conquer you only by my suffering. The Ali brothers will certainly draw the sword, if they could, in defence of their religion and their country. But they and I have made common cause with the people of India in their attempt to voice their feelings and to find a remedy for their distress.

"You are in search of a remedy to suppress this rising ebullition of national feeling. I venture to suggest the causes. You have yet the power. You can repent of the wrongs done to Indians. You can compel Mr. Lloyd George to redeem his promises. I assure you he has kept many escape-doors. You can compel the Viceroy to retire in favour of a better one, you can revise your ideas about Sir Michael O'Dwyer and General Dyer. You can compel the Government to summon a conference of the recognized leaders of the people, duly elected by them and representing all shades of opinion so as to devise means for granting swaraj in accordance with the wishes of the people of India.

"But this you cannot do unless you consider every Indian to be in reality your equal and brother. I ask for no patronage, I merely point out to you, as a friend, an honourable solution of a grave problem. The other solution, namely, repression, is open to you. I prophesy that it will fail. It has begun already. The Government has already imprisoned two brave men of Panipat for holding and expressing their opinions freely. Another is on his trial in Lahore for having expressed similar opinions. One in the district of Oudh is already imprisoned. Another awaits judgement. You should know what is going on in your midst. Our propaganda is being carried on in anticipation of repression. I invite you respectfully to choose the better way and make common cause with the people of India whose salt you are eating. To seek to thwart their aspirations is disloyalty to the country."

Gandhi's activities made the Government panicky. The Government published a proclamation, in which threats and paternal advice



Assassination of a Deputy Commissioner

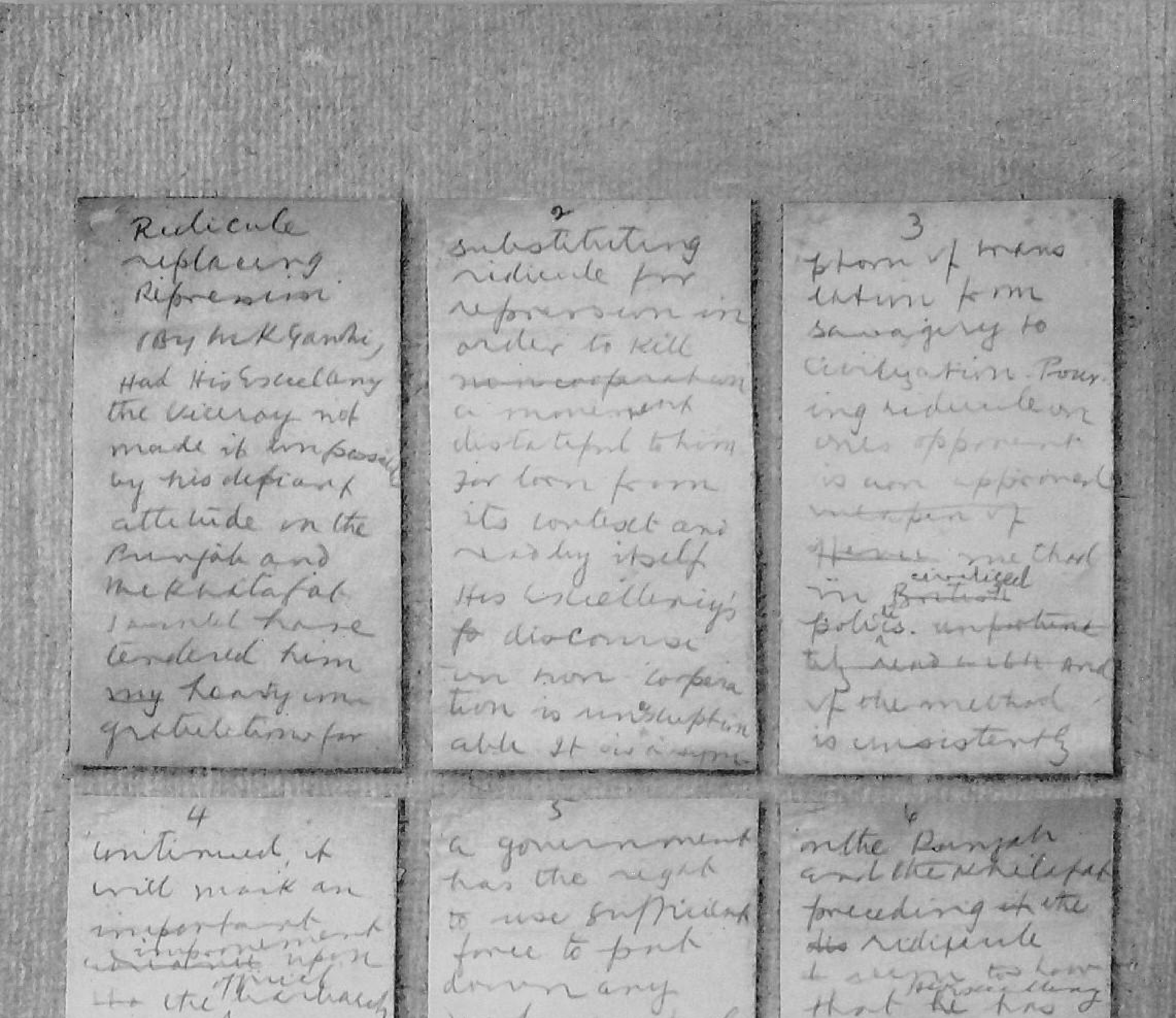
(By M. K. Gandhi)

The Assassination of Mr. Willoughby is a most unfortunate event which has naturally evoked public indignation. The murder was a cruel thoughtless and fanatical act. It has not advanced but retarded the cause of Khilafat. Mr. Willoughby had no hand in the Khilafat terms. As is quite probable, he was himself a popular officer. It can only be counted as madness to kill any innocent man for the crime committed by a member of his race. And yet the fact must not be disguised that the murder will be regarded by many Mahomedans as a pious act worthy of a martyr. I have heard Mahomedans calmly arguing that such murders are not only justifiable but meritorious. I have known many Hindus who have argued that it was the throwing of bombs which brought about the removal of the partition of Bengal. I know that many consider Dhingra to have been a martyr. The Sinn Feiners openly practice murder and other forms of violence for the purpose of freeing their country from the English connection. Every assassin or incendiary is considered a hero. It is because I feared such a result in our midst that I advised non-violent non-co-operation and its regarding the Khilafat, [illegible]

In my opinion, it is the active and persistent preaching of non-cooperation which has prevented murders and assassinations in the land. The murder of Mr. Willoughby proves that the propaganda

*Courtesy : Girdhari Kripalani*

Manuscript of Gandhi's article, "Assassination of a Deputy Commissioner", in *Young India*, September 1, 1920


Ridicule replacing Repression

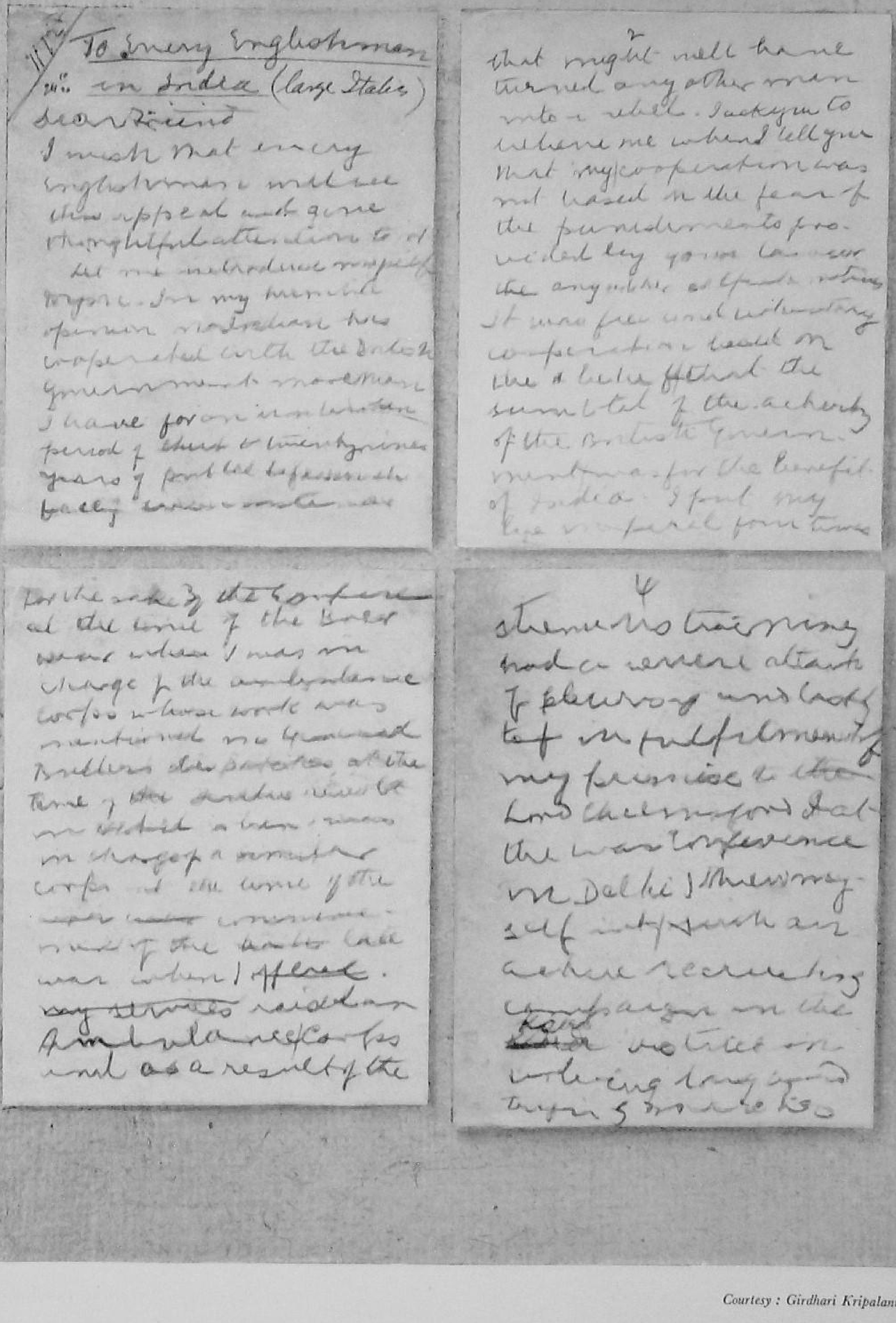
(By M. K. Gandhi)

Had His Excellency the Viceroy not made it impossible by his defiant attitude on the Punjab and the Khilafat I would have tendered him my hearty congratulations for substituting ridicule for repression in order to kill a movement distasteful to him. For torn from its context and read by itself His Excellency's discourse on non-cooperation is unexceptionable. It is an impro- ... form of trans- ... lation from savagery to civilization. Pouring ridicule on one's opponent is now approved method in civilized politics. ... of the method is consistently continued, it will mark an important improvement upon the [illegible] of the Punjab. His interpretation of Mr Montagu's statement about the movement is also not open to any objection whatsoever. I without doubt [illegible] a government has the right to use sufficient force to put down any actual outbreak of violence.

But I regret to have to confess that this attempt to pour ridicule on the movement read in conjunction with the sentiments on the Punjab and the Khilafat preceding the ridicule it seems to show that he has made it a virtue of necessity. He has not finally abandoned the method of terrorism and frightfulness but he finds the movement being conducted [illegible]

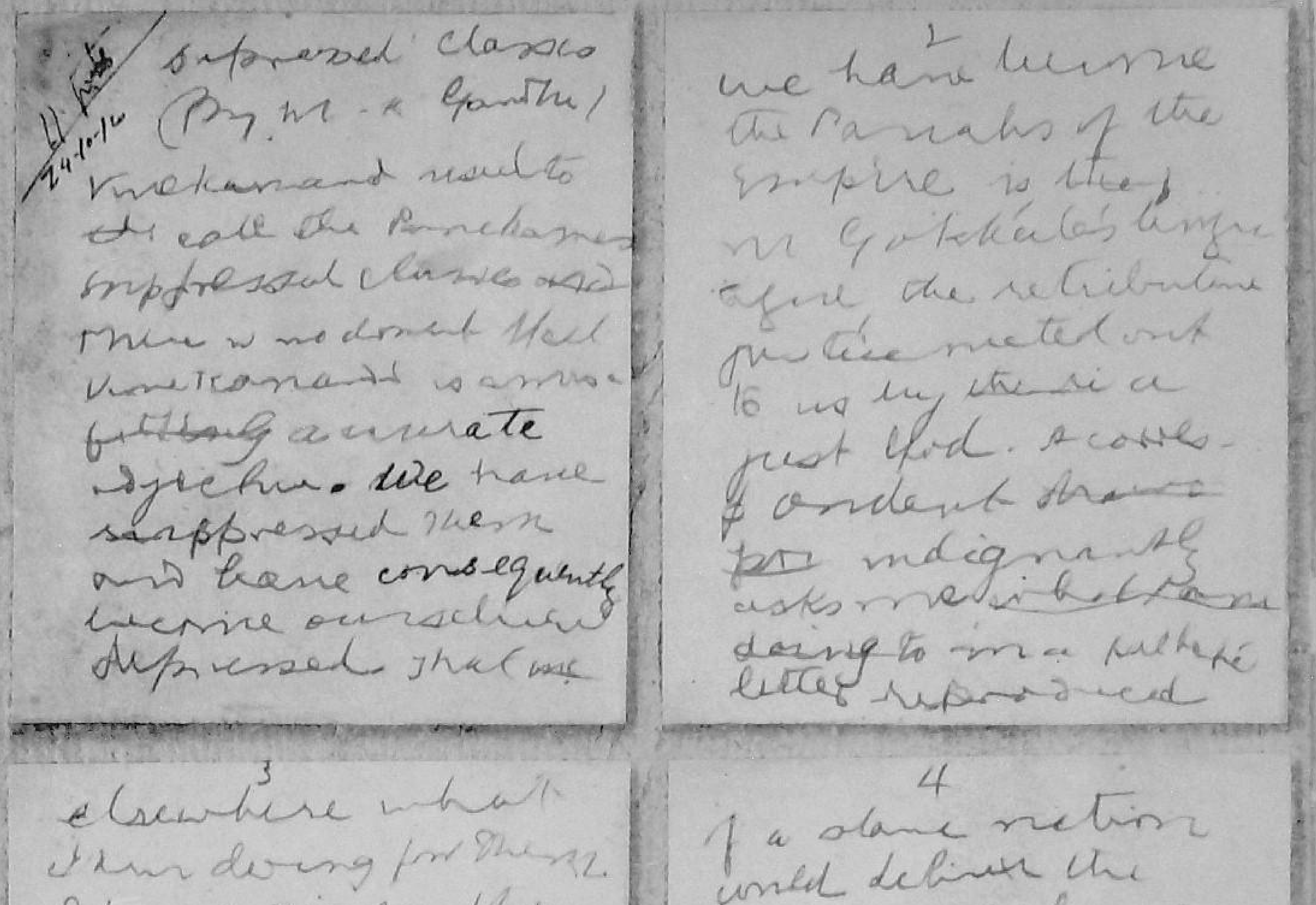
*Courtesy : Girdhari Kripalani*

Manuscript of Gandhi's editorial, "Ridicule Replacing Repression", in *Young India*, September 1, 1920



Courtesy : Girdhari Kripalani

Gandhi's historic appeal, "To Every Englishman in India", in *Young India*, October 27, 1920



Depressed Classes
(By M. K. Gandhi)

Vivekanand used to call the Panchamas suppressed classes. There is no doubt that Vivekanand's is a more accurate adjective. We have suppressed them and have consequently become ourselves depressed. That we have become the pariahs of the Empire is, Mr. Gokhale's language, the retributive justice meted out to us by a just God. A correspondent indignantly asks me what I am doing in a letter reproduced elsewhere what I am doing for them. I have given the letter with the correspondent's own heading. Should not we Hindus wash our blood-stained hands before we ask the English to wash theirs? This is a proper question reasonably put. And if I a slave member of a slave nation could deliver the suppressed classes from their slavery without freeing myself from the slavery, I would do so today. But it is an impossible task. A slave has not the freedom even to do the right thing. It is right for me to prohibit the

Courtesy: Girdhari Kripalani

Gandhi's manuscript of his article on "Depressed Classes", in *Young India*, October 27, 1920

were given, warning the people that while the leaders of the movement had not been molested so far, orders had now been given to arrest anyone who overstepped the bounds and whose words might stir up revolt or in other ways incite people to violence.

Gandhi considered the communique as the first triumph for the campaign. He issued instructions as to what people should do if he were arrested. In November, he wrote in *Young India*:

"What would be the plight of India if the people took to the wrong path through love run mad? What would be my own plight in such a case?

"Rivers of blood shed by the Government cannot frighten me, but I would be deeply pained even if the people so much as abuse the Government for my sake or in my name. It would be disgracing me if the people lost their equilibrium on my arrest. The nation can achieve no progress merely by depending upon me. Progress is possible by their understanding and following the path suggested by me. For this reason, I desire that the people should maintain perfect self-control and consider the day of my arrest as a day of rejoicing. I desire that even the weaknesses existing today should disappear at that time.

"What can be the motive of the Government in arresting me? The Government are not my enemy, for I have not a grain of enmity towards them. But they believe that I am the soul of all this agitation, that if I am removed, the ruled and the rulers would be left in peace, that the people are blindly following me. Not only the India Government but some of our leaders also share this belief. How, then, can the Government put the people to the test? How can the Government ascertain whether the people understand my advice or are simply dazzled by my utterances? The only way left to them is to arrest me. Of course, there still remains an alternative for them and that lies in the removal of the causes which have led me to offer this advice. But intoxicated as they are with power, the Government will not see their own fault and even if they do, they will not admit it. The only way then that remains for them is to measure the strength of the people. They can do this by arresting me. If the people are thus terrorized into submission they can be said to deserve the Punjab and the Khilafat wrongs.

"If on the other hand the people resort to violence, they will be playing into the hands of the Government. Their aeroplanes will

then bomb the people, their Dyers will shoot into them, and their Smiths will uncover the veils of our women. There will be other officers to make the people rub their noses against the ground, crawl on their bellies, and undergo the scourge of whipping. Both these results will be equally bad and unfortunate. They will not lead to swaraj. In other countries governments have been overthrown by brute force, but I have often shown that India cannot attain swaraj by that force. What, then, should the people do if I am arrested? The answer now is simple."

He asked the people to preserve peace and calmness and take to full-fledged non-co-operation combined with constructive programme of all-embracing swadeshi. Consistent with his preaching he took a vow not to eat till his daily quota of half-hour's spinning was fulfilled. He wrote:

"If the people resolve and carry this programme of boycott and swadeshi out, they would not have to wait for swaraj even for a year. If they can exhibit this much strength we shall have attained swaraj.

"I shall then be set free under the nation's seal. That will please me. My freedom today is like a prison to me.

"It will only prove the people's incompetence if they use violence to release me, and then depend upon my help to attain swaraj for them. Neither I nor anyone else can get swaraj for the nation. It will be got on the nation proving its own fitness.

"It is useless to find fault with the Government. We get what government we deserve. When we improve, the government also is bound to improve. Only when we improve can we attain swaraj. Non-co-operation is the nation's determination to improve. Will the nation abandon the resolve and begin to co-operate after my arrest? If the people become mad and take to violence and as a result of it crawl on their bellies, rub their noses on the ground, salute the Union Jack and walk eighteen miles to do it, what else is that but co-operation? It is better to die than to submit to crawling and etc. In fine, consider it from any point of view, the course suggested by me is the right one for the people to take."

The Congress was held at Nagpur on December 26 under the presidentship of Vijayaraghavachari. His address was originally against the boycott of schools and colleges and suspension of practice by lawyers was radically altered in those parts whilst being read. The president differed on several important points from Gandhi and

he mildly criticized some of the features of the Calcutta resolution on non-co-operation.

Das was there with a large number of delegates from Bengal to oppose Gandhi. The opposition from Maharashtra led by Khaparde and Kelkar was not less intense. But whatever the attitude of the president, whatever the apprehensions of some of the leaders led by Jinnah, the fourteen thousand delegates had already made up their mind in the matter. They were not prepared to allow any moderation in the pace of the Congress and demanded the brakes put at Calcutta to be removed. Gandhi wanted the non-co-operation resolution to be "comprehensive, definite and effective". The Calcutta resolution was the thin end of the wedge. It enunciated the principle of non-co-operation, commenced sketching a programme and abruptly stopped in the middle. The non-co-operation doctrine did not appear in its proper and complete perspective. Gandhi resolved to give it the finishing touch at Nagpur and succeeded in enlisting support for the whole of his programme, of those very people who had opposed its first step at Calcutta.

Considerable pressure was brought to bear upon Gandhi for withdrawal of boycott of courts and the ban on practising pleaders. Here he stood firm, and the resolution reaffirming the Calcutta resolution declared that the Congress was not satisfied with the way in which the nation's call had been responded to by the lawyers and that greater effort must, therefore, be made. As regards the boycott of educational institutions, Lajpat Rai pressed for a slight amendment which Gandhi readily accepted. Some amendments were moved by Das after which the resolution on non-co-operation was passed unanimously. In the open Congress the resolution was moved by Das, Bepin Chandra Pal supporting it.

The ratification of the non-co-operation resolution was acknowledged with the following preamble: "Whereas in the opinion of the Congress the existing Government of India has forfeited the confidence of the country, and the people of India are determined to establish swaraj, as all methods hitherto adopted by the people of India failed to secure due recognition of their rights and liberties and the redress of their many and grievous wrongs, more specially in reference to the Khilafat and the Punjab, now this Congress, while reaffirming the resolution on non-violent non-co-operation, declares that the entire or any part of the non-violent non-co-operation

scheme, with the renunciation of voluntary association with the Government at one end, and the refusal to pay taxes at the other, should be put in force at a time to be determined by either the Indian National Congress or the All-India Congress Committee; and that, in the meanwhile, in order to prepare the country for it, effective steps should be taken in that behalf."

Another resolution asked the people to refrain from taking part in the functions in honour of the Duke of Connaught during his coming visit to India. The goal of the Congress was hotly discussed. In the constitution, that Gandhi had presented, the goal of the Congress was the attainment of swaraj within the British Empire if possible and without if necessary. A party in the Congress headed by Malaviya and Jinnah wanted to limit the goal to swaraj within the British Empire only. But they were able to get very few votes. Again the draft constitution provided that the means for the attainment were to be peaceful and legitimate. This too came in for opposition. Jinnah in opposing the resolution said that it was neither logically nor politically sound nor wise to place before the Congress the object of the "attainment of swaraj by all legitimate and peaceful means". He made bold to say that India would never get her independence without bloodshed, and as the country had neither the will nor the capacity to resort to violence, a declaration for unadulterated swaraj was a hasty step. He was unable to agree with the suggestion that the creed was made deliberately elastic so as to include not only those who advocated British connection but also those who wanted to destroy it. "Is it possible," he asked, "for us to stand on the same platform after this creed is passed, one saying that he wants to keep the British connection and another that he does not want it?" Jinnah wound up his arguments by an appeal to Gandhi to cry halt.

The Congress gave one day to a full discussion of the creed and devoted the last day to listening to the remaining thirty-two articles of the constitution which were read and translated by Mahomed Ali. There was dissent when the eighth article was read. It referred to non-interference by the Congress in the internal affairs of the Indian states. Happily a resolution suggesting the advisability of establishing responsible government in the states enabled Gandhi to illustrate to the audience that the proviso did not preclude the Congress from ventilating the grievances and aspirations of the

subjects of these states, whilst it clearly prevented the Congress from taking any executive action in connection with them, such as the holding of a hostile demonstration in the states.

One of the first resolutions passed was on the aim of the Congress. This afterwards became its creed. Gandhi's amendment as adopted read thus: "That the object of the Congress is the attainment of swaraj by the people of India by all legitimate and peaceful means." Regarding the new constitution Gandhi observed: "I regard this constitution with a certain measure of pride. I hold, that if we could fully work out this constitution, the mere fact of working it out would bring us swaraj. With the assumption of this responsibility I may be said to have made my real entrance into the Congress politics."

Resolutions on Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability and khadi were passed by this Congress. It advised the formation of a band of national workers to be called the Indian National Service, to be financed out of the funds called the All-India Tilak Memorial Swaraj Fund. The Congress paid homage to the memory of Terence MacSwiney, the Mayor of Cork, who died after a fast lasting seventy-four days for the sake of Irish independence.

In the changed atmosphere, the Congress decided to wind up the British Committee and its journal, *India*, published in London for the last thirty years. In justifying this, Gandhi said: "The paper costs much more than it is worth. Its influence on English opinion is practically nothing and it is an indifferent vehicle of English opinion for India's enlightenment. Now that we have embarked on non-co-operation and are determined to become self-reliant it would be consistent for us to disestablish the British Committee and stop *India*. I would far concentrate all our attention and all our best workers on India. The harvest is rich and the labourers are few. We can ill spare a single worker for foreign work."

Now the Congress organization was carried forward from its loose character to the machinery of a modern party, with its units reaching down to the villages and localities and with a standing executive of fifteen. The other features of the new constitution were a distribution of the provinces on a linguistic basis, reorganization of the Congress and its subordinate committees and regulation of the elections and number of delegates.

The support that Gandhi obtained at Nagpur was greater than what he had had in Calcutta. The boycott of the elections to the

new legislatures, which were held in November, was successful, two-thirds of the electors abstaining. Sir Valentine Chirol has given an appreciation of one of the elections in a small township, about fifteen miles from Allahabad: "There was nothing to show that this was the red-letter day in the history of modern India which was to initiate her people into the great art of self-government. Only the little courtyard, we found, had been swept and garnished for use as a polling-station. Inside, the presiding officer with his assistants sat at his table with his freshly printed electoral roll in front of him. But from eight in the morning till past twelve not a single voter had presented himself in the course of the whole day." Referring to the new councillors, *Nation* wrote: "There may be highly respectable persons among them—wealthy men, men enjoying decorations—but on the whole they are elderly and timid men who have little driving power, little initiative and no great popular following."

The Congress represented the masses and became a revolutionary body under the leadership of Gandhi. The president observed that it was a Congress in which, instead of the president and the leaders driving the people, the people drove him and the leaders.

## *First Test*

1921

THE ADOPTION of the new programme at Nagpur was the signal for a rapid advance of the mass movement. The Congress did not conceal the fact that it regarded non-co-operation in its present form as a preliminary step only, to be followed, at a time to be determined later, by complete non-co-operation, including refusal to pay taxes. In order to pave the way for non-violent revolt, it urged that the boycott be sharpened and spinning and weaving be encouraged, while an appeal was sent out to the students and lawyers inviting them to pursue non-co-operation with greater zeal.

The resolution of the Congress implied the virtual establishment of a state within a state, the setting up of swaraj in opposition to the British Government. Gandhi's slogan was "Swaraj in one year".

The British could not countenance the mass awakening. There was trouble in Ireland and chances of revolt in Turkey. Fraternization of the Soviet Union with the Asiatic countries and the anti-British policy of King Amanullah in Afghanistan served as a check on the naked repressive character of the British imperialism. The British Government had to do something. They had to fight or negotiate. First they chose to conciliate those they could.

The revolutionary nature of the movement frightened the Indian Liberals. Sastri's open letter dated December 10, 1920 was an indication of their attitude to the Congress: "In spite of the dissuasion of many friends of our party, I have been attending the sessions of the Indian National Congress whenever I could. My experience, however, has been most disheartening. Every session since the special meeting in Bombay in 1918 has outdone its predecessor in the adoption of impracticable programme, in unreasoning opposition to Government. So long as there was the slightest hope left, some of us felt it a duty to warn our reckless countrymen against the perils of the course along which they were drifting. That excuse is no longer

there after the non-co-operation movement began and even the nationalists who opposed it resolved, out of a mistaken sense of a loyalty to the Congress, to fall into line. I confess the idea of going to the Congress no longer appeals to me."

The Liberals hoped that a large and influential party would gather round the flag of co-operation. Mrs. Besant and her colleagues made a united front with the Liberals. Chintamani, who presided over the Madras session of the Liberal Federation in December 1920, declared: "Our opposition to non-co-operation springs from our conviction of its futility, the harm it would do to our cause and our country." And he added, "We can and shall reach our political goal of complete self-government such as the dominions enjoy, by constitutional action inside the councils and outside."

The Liberals not only kept away from the Congress, they became ministers and high officials under the new scheme, and helped in fighting non-co-operation and the Congress. The Government generously showered honours on those who opposed the movement. Surendranath Banerjea was knighted. Lord Sinha became the first Indian Governor of Bihar and Orissa. Sastri became an imperial envoy, visiting, at the instance of the British Government, various British dominions as well as the United States of America, and strongly criticizing the Congress and his own countrymen for the struggle they were carrying on against the Government.

The Duke of Connaught, uncle of King George, was sent over to assuage the resentment in India. He came to open the four chief legislatures, and landing on January 10, 1921, opened the Madras Legislative Council on January 12. The Bengal Legislative Council he opened on February 3. On February 9 he opened the Legislative Assembly in Delhi. Autocracy was declared to have been abandoned both by the Viceroy and the Duke. The King sent his message, proclaiming "the beginning of swaraj within my empire". The King expressed sorrow for the Punjab tragedy and his sympathy with the sufferers. The Duke said: "I have reached a time of life when I most desire to heal wounds and reunite those who have been disunited. An old friend of India, I appeal to you all—British and Indians—to bury along with the dead past the mistakes and misunderstandings of the past, to forgive where you have to forgive and to join hands and work together to realize the hopes that arise from today." The Bombay Legislative Council was opened by the Duke

on February 23. Then the messenger of "peace and goodwill" went back to England.

In a letter addressed to the Duke of Connaught, Gandhi wrote: "For me it is no joy and pleasure to be actively associated in the boycott of Your Royal Highness' visit. I have tendered loyal, voluntary assistance to the Government for an unbroken period of thirty years in the full belief that through that lay the path of freedom for my country. It was, therefore, no slight thing for me to suggest to my countrymen that we should take no part in welcoming Your Royal Highness. Not one amongst us has anything against you as an English gentleman. We hold your person as sacred as that of a dearest friend. I do not know any of my friends who would not guard it with his life if he found it in danger.

"We are not at war with individual Englishmen. We seek not to destroy English life. We do desire to destroy the system that has emasculated our country in body, mind and soul. We are determined to battle with all our might against that in English nature which has made O'Dwyerism and Dyerism possible in the Punjab and has resulted in a wanton affront upon Islam, a faith professed by seven crores of our countrymen. We consider it inconsistent with our self-respect to brook the spirit of superiority and dominance which has systematically ignored and disregarded the sentiments of thirty crores of innocent people of India on many a vital matter. It is humiliating to us. It cannot be a matter of pride to you that thirty crores of Indians should live day in and day out in fear of their lives from one hundred thousand Englishmen and, therefore, be under subjection to them.

"Your Royal Highness has come, not to end the system I have described, but to sustain it by upholding its prestige. Your first pronouncement was a laudation of Lord Willingdon. I have the privilege of knowing him. I believe him to be an honest, amiable gentleman, who will not willingly hurt a fly, but he certainly failed as a ruler. He allowed himself to be guided by those whose interest it was to support their power. He is not reading the mind of the Dravidian province. Here, in Bengal, you are issuing a certificate of merit to a Governor who is again, from all I have heard, an estimable gentleman, but who knows nothing of the heart of Bengal and its yearnings. Bengal is not Calcutta; Fort William and the palaces of Calcutta represent an insolent exploitation of the unmurmuring and highly cultured peasantry of this fair province.

"The non-co-operationists have come to the conclusion that they must not be deceived by the reforms that tinker with the problem of India's distress and humiliation, nor must they be impatient and angry. We must not in our impatient anger resort to stupid violence. We freely admit that we must take our due share of blame for the existing state. It is not so much British guns that are responsible for our subjection as our voluntary co-operation.

"Our non-participation in a welcome to Your Royal Highness is thus in no sense a demonstration against your high personage, but it is against the system you come to uphold. I know individual Englishmen cannot, even if they will, alter the English nature all of a sudden. If we would be the equals of Englishmen we must cast off fear. We must learn to be self-reliant and independent of schools, courts, protection, and patronage of a Government we seek to end, if it will not mend.

"Hence this non-violent non-co-operation. I know we have not all yet become non-violent in speech and deed, but the results so far achieved have, I assure Your Royal Highness, been amazing. The people have understood the secret and value of non-violence as they have never done before. He, who will, may see that this is a religious, purifying movement. We are leaving off drink. We are trying to rid India of the curse of untouchability. We are trying to throw off foreign tinsel splendour, and by reverting to the spinning wheel reviving the ancient and poetic simplicity of life. We hope thereby to sterilize the existing harmful institutions.

"I ask Your Royal Highness as an Englishman to study this movement and its possibilities for the empire and the world. We are at war with nothing that is good in the world. In protecting Islam in the manner we are, we are protecting all religions, in protecting the honour of India, we are protecting the honour of humanity. For our means are hurtful to none. We desire to live on terms of friendship with Englishmen, but that friendship must be friendship of equals both in theory and in practice, and we must continue to non-co-operate, that is, to purify ourselves till the goal is achieved. I ask Your Royal Highness, and through you every Englishman, to appreciate the viewpoint of non-co-operation."

"The beginning of swaraj within my empire" was not an attractive offer to the Congress. A series of broken promises had taught the people not to rely on the empty phrases of the rulers. Gandhi

taught the people to rely on their own strength and to build it up through struggle and constructive work. "Non-co-operation," he wrote, "is a movement intended to invite the English to co-operate with us on honourable terms or retire from our land. It is a movement to place our relations on a pure basis, to define them in a manner consistent with our self-respect and dignity."

The days of merely passing resolutions during Christmas Week and sleeping over them till the next Christmas were gone. Gandhi observed: "It will be more and more difficult for those to attend the Congress who do not act up to their profession. Every one is called upon to withdraw his children from government-managed or controlled schools. Every one is called upon to use only hand-woven cloth made from hand-spun yarn. Every one is called upon to subscribe to the Tilak Memorial Swaraj Fund. This movement of non-violent non-co-operation is a searching of the heart. The workers must constantly awaken people to a sense of their duty. The whole Congress organization must be utilized for the enforcement of the programme. The new constitution enables the workers to organize the whole nation within one year for carrying out the programme in detail and if the vast body of the people of India make conscious effort, nothing can thwart its legitimate wish for self-determination."

Gandhi was determined to build the sinews of war around the All-India Tilak Memorial Swaraj Fund: "Welcome as the thousands of the monied men must be to us, we must rely upon the pice of the masses. Every pice knowingly given will be a token of the determination of the giver to establish swaraj." To fill the purse Gandhi suggested that the people should abandon their questionable habits and their vices: "If the women of India were to surrender their superfluous ornaments, if the wine-bibbers were to give up their drink and give to the movement half their savings, if the smokers were to suspend their smoke pending attainment of swaraj, and give to the cause half their savings, we would get all the money we need for bringing the movement to a successful close."

His message of non-co-operation bore fruit first in Bengal. As early as January, on an appeal by Das, 3,000 college students went on strike in Calcutta. Thousands of boys and girls deserted schools. In a message to the youth of Bengal, Gandhi said: "I had expected no less; I certainly expect still more. Bengal has great intelligence,

it has a greater heart, it has more than its share of the spiritual heritage for which our country is specially noted. You have more imagination, more faith, and more emotion than the rest of India. You have falsified the calumny of cowardice on more occasions than one. There is, therefore, no reason why Bengal should not lead now as it has done before now. You have taken the step, you will not recede. You have paused and you have considered. You held the Congress that delivered to the nation the message of non-co-operation, that is, of self-purification, self-sacrifice, courage and hope. The Nagpur Congress ratified, clarified, and amplified the first declaration. It was delivered in the midst of strife, doubt and disunion. It was open to you to refuse or to hesitate to respond. You have chosen the better, though, from a worldly-wise standpoint, less cautious way. You dare not go back without hurting yourselves and the cause. When we come to think about it, the sacrifice required is infinitesimal for individuals, because the whole is distributed among so many of us. For what is your sacrifice? To suspend your literary studies for one year or till swaraj is established. If I could infect the whole of the student world with my faith, I know that the suspension of studies need not extend even to a year." He appealed to the students to take to the charkha and spread the gospel of swadeshi among the masses.

At the first opportunity Gandhi went to Calcutta and this added to the enthusiasm of Bengal. He opened the National College on February 4. National schools were started throughout Bengal.

He visited Patna and inaugurated the Bihar Vidyapith. In less than four months national colleges were started in Patna, Aligarh, Ahmedabad, Bombay, Benares and Delhi. And there were national universities in Bengal, Gujarat and Bihar. Jamia Millia Islamia or the National Muslim University was founded by the joint efforts of Gandhi and Mahomed Ali.

Students emptied schools and colleges, and many lawyers gave up their practice. Motilal Nehru, Das, Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad and Rajagopalachari were among the distinguished lawyers who renounced their princely incomes to dedicate themselves to the service of the country. Sacrifice became the test of leadership. The outstanding instance of a government servant giving up his post was that of Subhas Chandra Bose. Inspired by Gandhi's appeal, Subhas, at the age of twenty-five, resigned from the Indian Civil

Service and at the instance of Das took up the principalship of the National College in Calcutta.

Sheth Jamnalal Bajaj donated one lakh of rupees to the Tilak Swaraj Fund. A large portion of this money was meant for the maintenance of the lawyers who wanted to join the movement. The Working Committee held at Calcutta in February decided to grant not more than Rs. 100 per month to such lawyers as would devote themselves to the Congress work, people joining the national service to receive not more than Rs. 50. Pending the evolution of a detailed curriculum of studies in the national schools and colleges, Hindustani and hand-spinning were to be taught and a course of training was sketched to be given to village workers. C. R. Das was put in charge of labour organization, which was only a year old, the first session of the All-India Trade Union Congress being held in Bombay in 1920.

Whirlwind propaganda began all over the country. Owing to the prominence given to the Khilafat movement, a large number of Muslim leaders and maulvis took a prominent part in the political struggle. The influence of the Khilafat Committee and Jamiat-ul-Ulema was distinctly felt in the Congress. The Political awakening reached its high watermark. Hindus and Muslims vied with one another in demonstrations of fraternization. Orthodox Hindus invited Muslim leaders to dine in their homes. Muslim purdah women attended meetings and invited Gandhi to address them. A unique spectacle was the Muslim leaders going to these normally prohibited meetings with bandages on their eyes. Gandhi, they said, was pure enough to go anywhere and everywhere. Muslim women would not hesitate to have him in their midst. The climax was reached when Muslims refrained not only from eating beef but even from sacrificing cows on the sacred day of Id.

The A.-I.C.C. met at Bezwada on March 31 and passed a resolution pressing the people to concentrate on three items. It resolved to bring the Tilak Memorial Swaraj Fund to one crore of rupees, to put on the Congress register one crore of members, introduce in the villages and cities twenty lakhs of spinning wheels—all the items to be completed by June 30, 1921, and every province to fulfil its quota in the ratio of its population.

To achieve the Congress objectives the leaders worked incessantly. There were meetings all over the country, attended by hundreds of

thousands, men and women, and addressed by Gandhi and Azad, in one province by the Ali brothers, in another by C. R. Das, Motilal Nehru and Jawaharlal. Gandhi worked hardest and according to time-table. The response was phenomenal. A crore of rupees were collected in time. Announcing the collection Gandhi wrote: "The subscription is but a milestone on the journey. The crore cannot give us swaraj, nor the richness of the whole world. Before we can be wholly free, we must be economically independent. A man who is forced to starve cannot be expected to pray to God. A starving man will sell his soul. He has no soul to keep. Before, therefore, India can think of freedom, she must feel economically independent. And this she cannot do, so long as she is almost wholly dependent upon the foreign market for her cloth. One who owes this oxygen to the pump is a dying man. Is it any wonder that India is in a dying condition? If then we want to achieve swaraj during this year, we cannot do so till we have brought about by self-renunciation, a complete boycott of foreign cloth."

Many of new recruits who worked for the Congress programme lived in a kind of intoxication. The feeling of fear, oppression and frustration completely disappeared. Even in the remote villages the people talked of the Congress and swaraj, and what had happened in the Punjab and the Khilafat. The word "Khilafat" bore a very strange meaning in most of the rural areas. People thought it came from *khilaf*, an Urdu word meaning "against" and so they took it to mean "opposed to Government". There was a strange mixture of nationalism, religion and mysticism.

"Whilst we may not be dissatisfied with the progress made so far, we have little to our credit to make us feel proud," dinned Gandhi. "We have to sacrifice much more than we have done to justify pride, much less elation. Thousands, who flocked to the Congress, have undoubtedly given their intellectual assent to the doctrine but few who have followed it in practice. Leaving aside the pleaders, how many have withdrawn their children from schools? How many of those who registered their vote in favour of non-co-operation have taken to spinning or discarded the use of all foreign cloth?" He stressed the inner meaning of the campaign: "Non-co-operation is not a movement of brag, bluster or bluff. It is a test of our sincerity. It requires solid and silent self-sacrifice. It challenges our honesty and our capacity for national work. It is a movement that aims at

translating ideas into action. And the more we do, the more we find that much more be done than we had expected. And this thought of our imperfection must make us humble."

As the people's morale grew, that of the Government went down. Repression started in a small way. By the second week of March orders of restraint were passed against Das entering Mymensingh, Rajendra Prasad and Mazharal Haque entering Arrah, Yakub Hasan entering Calcutta, and Lala Lajpat Rai entering Peshawar. Restraint orders were issued against many others. It was a period of great tension, and there was much to annoy and unnerve the officials. The wave of repression reached the farthest corner of India. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who was doing educational and social work in the Frontier villages, was arrested and sentenced to three years' imprisonment. The Government dreaded any activity undertaken without their help or consent.

Despite the repressive policy of the Government, Gandhi advised patience. His insistence on non-violence and the constructive programme was a regular feature of his writings and speeches. The secret of swaraj, he said, lay in the constructive programme. He insisted on the cleanest methods in the non-violent campaign. Social boycott of the co-operators and the Government servants was discouraged by him. Rowdyism in any form on the part of students was condemned in the harshest words. He riveted the attention of his followers on cultivating the spirit of non-violence, setting up Congress organizations in every village, introducing the spinning wheel in every house, promoting Hindu-Muslim unity, and ridding Hinduism of the curse of untouchability and otherwise purifying themselves by avoiding intoxicating drinks and drugs.

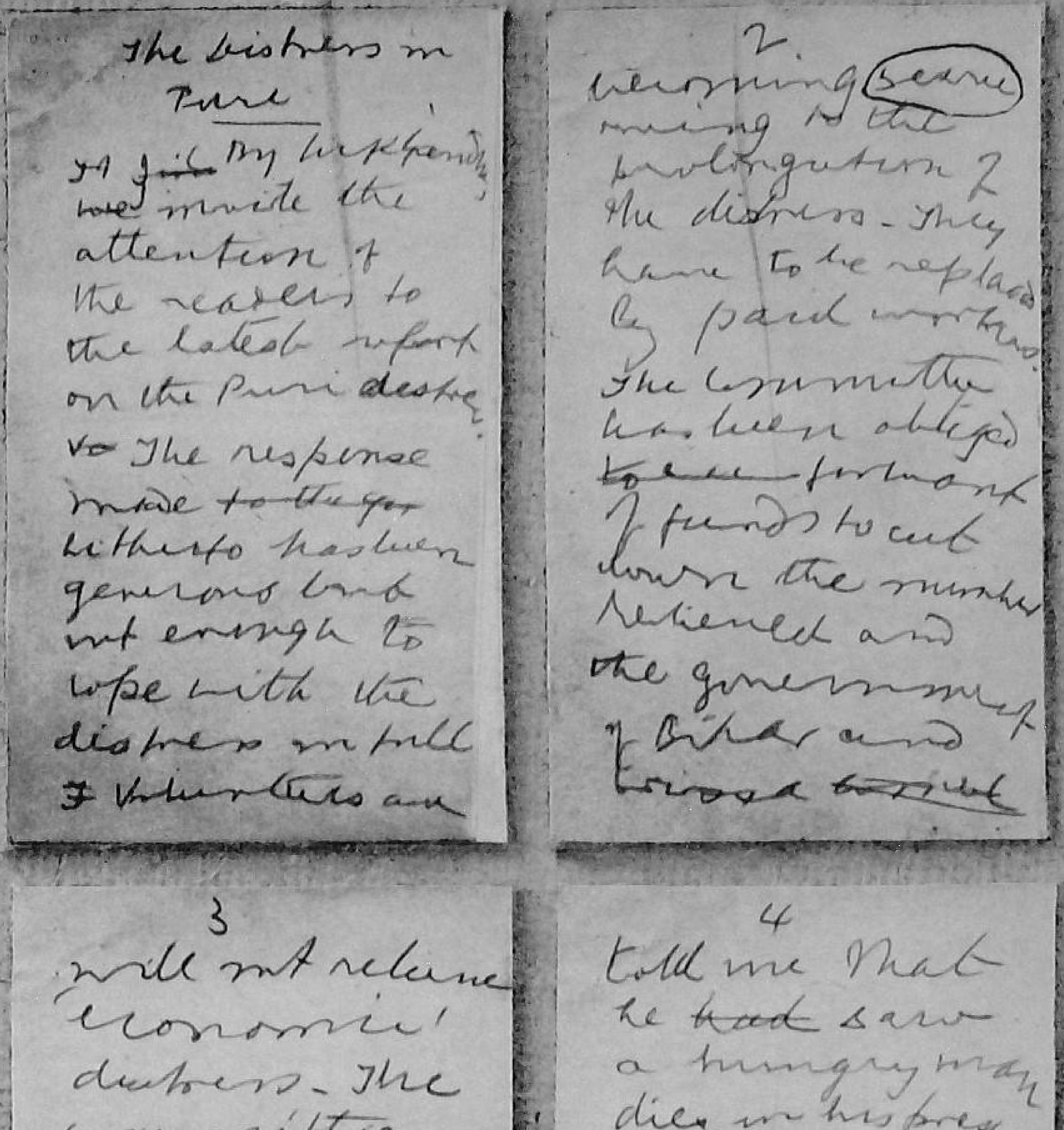
If Gandhi condemned the unjust rule of the British, he did not spare the Hindus of their inhuman treatment of the untouchables. Speaking at the Depressed Classes Conference held at Ahmedabad on April 13, he said:

"I regard untouchability as the greatest blot on Hinduism. This idea was not brought home to me by my bitter experiences during the South African struggle. It is not due to the fact that I was once an agnostic. It is equally wrong to think that I have taken my views from my study of Christian religious literature. These views date as far back as the time when I was neither enamoured of, nor was acquainted with, the Bible or the followers of the Bible.

"I was hardly yet twelve when this idea had dawned on me. A scavenger named Uka, an untouchable, used to attend our house for cleaning latrines. Often I would ask my mother why it was wrong to touch him, why I was forbidden to touch him. If I accidentally touched Uka, I was asked to perform the ablutions, and though I naturally obeyed, it was not without smilingly protesting that untouchability was not sanctioned by religion, that it was impossible that it should be so. I was a very dutiful and obedient child and so far as it was consistent with respect for parents, I often had tussles with them on this matter. I told my mother that she was entirely wrong in considering physical contact with Uka as sinful.

"While at school I would often happen to touch the 'untouchables', and as I never would conceal the fact from my parents, my mother would tell me that the shortest cut to purification after the unholy touch was to cancel the touch by touching any Musalman passing by. And simply out of reverence and regard for my mother I did so, but never did so believing it to be a religious obligation. After some time we shifted to Porbandar, where I made my first acquaintance with Sanskrit. I was not yet put to English school, and my brother and I were placed in charge of a Brahmin, who taught us *Ramaraksha* and *Vishnu Poojan*. The texts '*Jale Vishnuh*', '*Sthale Vishnuh*'—there is the Lord (present) in water, there is the Lord (present) in earth—have never gone out of my memory. A motherly old dame used to live close by. Now it happened that I was very timid then, and would conjure up ghosts and goblins whenever the lights went out, and it was dark. The old mother, to disabuse me of fears, suggested that I should mutter the *Ramaraksha* whenever I was afraid, and all evil spirits would fly away. This I did and, as I thought, with good effect. I could never believe then that there was any text in the *Ramaraksha* pointing to the contact of the 'untouchables' as a sin. I did not understand its meaning then, or understood it very imperfectly. But I was confident that *Ramaraksha* which could destroy all fear of ghosts, could not be countenancing any such thing as fear of contact with the 'untouchables'.

"The Ramayana used to be regularly read in our family. A Brahmin called Ladha Maharaj used to read it. He was stricken with leprosy, and he was confident that a regular reading of the Ramayana would cure him of leprosy, and he was cured of it. 'How can the Ramayana,' I thought to myself, 'in which one is



The distress in Puri

By Mr. Gandhi

I invite the attention of the readers to the latest report on the Puri distress. The response made hitherto has been generous but not enough to cope with the distress in full. Volunteers are

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becoming scarce owing to the prolongation of the distress. They have to be replaced by paid workers. The Committee has been obliged for want of funds to cut down the number relieved and the governments of Bihar and Orissa

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will not relieve 'economic' distress. The committee needs at least Rs 90000. I hope that the generous readers who see the appeal will not be slow to respond. An eyewitness who chanced to go to Puri from Calcutta

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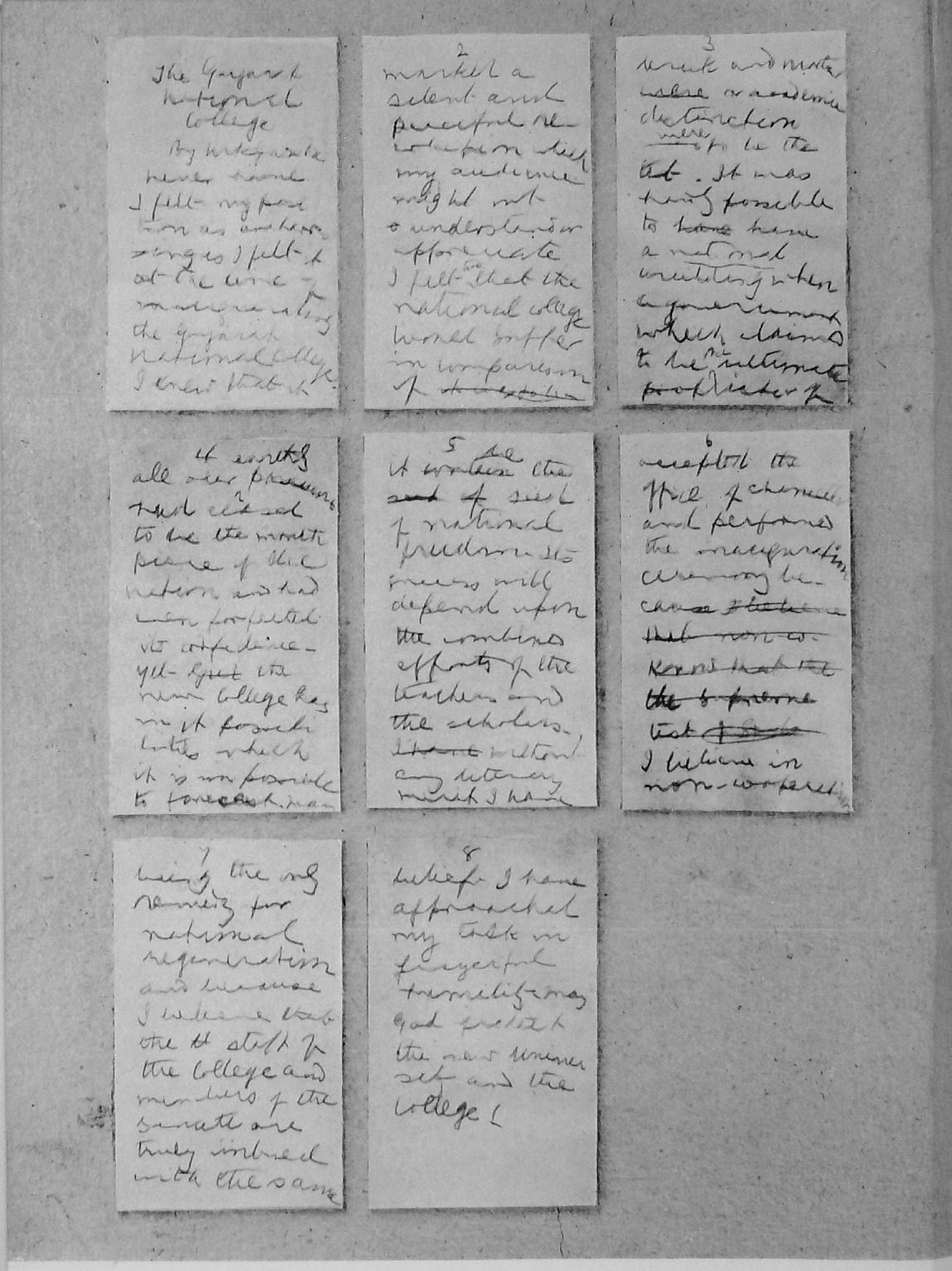
told me that he saw a hungry man die in his presence. He had walked to the place where relief was being given. He was too exhausted to live to get relief. Only the other day an Oriya was found in the act of

*Courtesy : Girdhari Kripalani*

Manuscript of Gandhi's moving description of the distress in Puri in *Young India*, October 1920

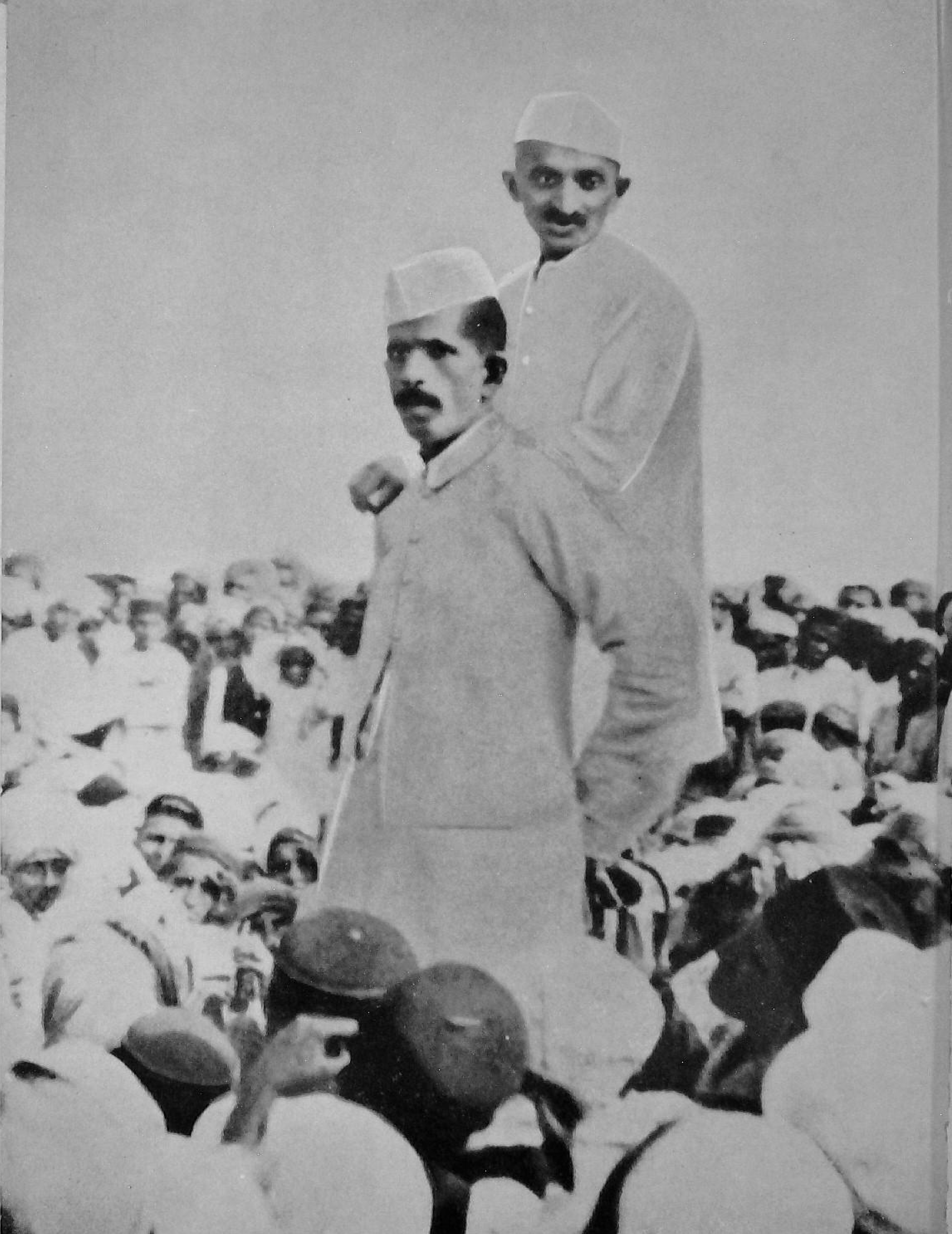


Courtesy : Girdhari Kripalani

Manuscript of Gandhi's article on "The Gujarat National College", in *Young India*, November 7, 1920

*Courtesy : Kashi Vidyapith*

Gandhi and Motilal Nehru at the inauguration ceremony of Kashi Vidyapith, Benares, February 10, 1921



*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi addressing a meeting at Kalka, Simla, May 1921

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regarded nowadays as an untouchable took Rama across the Ganges in his boat, countenance the idea of any human beings being untouchable on the ground that they were polluted souls?' The fact that we addressed God as the 'purifier of the polluted' and by similar appellations, shows that it is a sin to regard any one born in Hinduism as polluted or untouchable—that it is satanic to do so. I have hence been never tired of repeating that it is a great sin. I do not pretend that this thing had crystallized as a conviction in me at the age of twelve, but I do say that I did then regard untouchability as a sin. I narrate this story for the information of the Vaishnavas and orthodox Hindus.

"I have always claimed to be a sanatani Hindu. It is not that I am quite innocent of the scriptures. I am not a profound scholar of Sanskrit. I have read the Vedas and the Upanishads only in translations. Naturally, therefore, mine is not a scholarly study of them. My knowledge of them is in no way profound, but I have studied them as I should do as a Hindu and I claim to have grasped their true spirit. By the time I had reached the age of twenty-one, I had studied other religions also.

"There was a time when I was wavering between Hinduism and Christianity. When I recovered my balance of mind, I felt that to me salvation was possible only through the Hindu religion and my faith in Hinduism grew deeper and more enlightened.

"But even then I believed that untouchability was no part of Hinduism; and that, if it was, such Hinduism was not for me.

"True Hinduism does not regard untouchability as a sin. I do not want to enter into any controversy regarding the interpretation of the shastras. It might be difficult for me to establish my point by quoting authorities from the *Bhagavat* or *Manusmriti*. But I claim to have understood the spirit of Hinduism. Hinduism has sinned in giving sanction to untouchability. It has degraded us, made us the pariahs of the empire. Even the Musalmans caught the sinful contagion from us; and in South Africa, in East Africa and in Canada, Musalmans no less than Hindus came to be regarded as pariahs. All this evil has resulted from the sin of untouchability.

"I may here recall my proposition, which is this: so long as the Hindus wilfully regard untouchability as part of their religion, so long as the mass of Hindus consider it a sin to touch a section of their brethren, swaraj is impossible of attainment. Yudhishthira would

not enter heaven without his dog. How can, then, the descendants of that Yudhishthira expect to obtain swaraj without the 'untouchables'? What crimes, for which we condemn the Government as satanic, have not we been guilty of towards our own untouchable brethren?

"We are guilty of having suppressed our brethren; we make them crawl on their bellies; we have made them rub their noses on the ground; with eyes red with rage, we push them out of railway compartments. What more than this has British rule done? What charge that we bring against Dyer and O'Dwyer may not others, and even our own people, lay at our doors? We ought to purge ourselves of this pollution. It is idle to talk of swaraj so long as we do not protect the weak and the helpless, or so long as it is possible for a single swarajist to injure the feelings of any individual. Swaraj means that not a single Hindu or Muslim shall for a moment arrogantly think that he can crush with impunity meek Hindus or Muslims. Unless this condition is fulfilled, we will gain swaraj only to lose it the next moment. We are no better than the brutes until we have purged ourselves of the sins we have committed against our weaker brethren."

The champion of social reform and constructive programme never lost sight of India's political fight. In the midst of ceaseless activity Gandhi suggested a flag for the non-violent revolt. In *Young India* dated April 13 he wrote:

"A flag is a necessity for all nations. Millions have died for it. It is no doubt a kind of idolatry which it would be a sin to destroy. For, a flag represents an ideal. The unfurling of the Union Jack evokes in the English breast sentiments whose strength it is difficult to measure. The Stars and Stripes mean a world to the Americans. The Star and the Crescent will call forth the best bravery in Islam.

"It will be necessary for us Indians—Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Parsis, and all others to whom India is their home—to recognize a common flag to live and to die for.

"Mr. P. Venkayya of the National College, Masulipatam, has for some years placed before the public a suggestive booklet describing the flags of the other nations and offering designs for an Indian national flag. But whilst I have always admired the persistent zeal with which Mr. Venkayya has prosecuted the cause of a national flag at every session of the Congress for the past four years, he has

never been able to enthuse me; and in his designs I saw nothing to stir the nation to its depths. It was reserved for a Punjabi to make a suggestion that at once arrested attention. It was Lala Hansraj of Jullundur who, in discussing the possibilities of the spinning wheel, suggested that it should find a place on our swaraj flag. I could not help admiring the originality of the suggestion. At Bezwada I asked Mr. Venkayya to give me a design containing a spinning wheel on red (Hindu colour) and green (Muslim colour) background. His enthusiastic spirit enabled me to possess a flag in three hours. It was just a little late for presentation to the All-India Congress Committee. I am glad it was so. On maturer consideration, I saw that the background should represent the other religions also. Hindu-Muslim unity is not an exclusive term; it is an inclusive term, symbolic of the unity of all faiths domiciled in India. If Hindus and Muslims can tolerate each other, they are together bound to tolerate all other faiths. The unity is not a menace to the other faiths represented in India or to the world. So I suggest that the background should be white and green and red. The white portion is intended to represent all other faiths. The weakest numerically occupy the first place, the Islamic colour comes next, the Hindu colour, red, comes last, the idea being that the strongest should act as a shield to the weakest. The white colour, moreover, represents purity and peace. Our national flag must mean that or nothing. And to represent the equality of the least of us with the best, an equal part is assigned to all the three colours in the design.

"But India as a nation can live and die only for the spinning wheel. Every woman will tell the curious that with the disappearance of the spinning wheel vanished India's happiness and prosperity. The womanhood and the masses of India have been awakened as never before at the call of the spinning wheel. The masses recognize in it the giver of life. The women regard it as the protector of chastity. Every widow has recognized in the wheel a dear forgotten friend. Its restoration alone can fill the millions of hungry mouths. No industrial development schemes can solve the problem of the growing poverty of the peasantry of India covering a vast surface 1,900 miles long and 1,500 miles broad. India is not an island, it is a big continent which cannot be converted like England into an industrial country. And we must resolutely set our face against any scheme of exploitation of the world. Our only hope must centre upon utilizing

the wasted hours of the nation, for adding to the wealth of the country, by converting cotton into cloth in our cottages. The spinning wheel is as much a necessity of Indian life as air and water.

"Moreover, the Muslims swear by it just as much as the Hindus. As a matter of fact, the former are taking to it more readily than the Hindus. For, the Muslim woman is *purdanashin* and she can add a few *paisas* to the poor resources that her husband brings to the family. The spinning wheel is the most natural, as it is the most important common factor of national life. Through it we inform the whole world that we are determined, so far as our food and clothing are concerned, to be independent of the rest of it. Those who believe with me will make haste to introduce the spinning wheel in their home and possess a national flag of the design suggested by me.

"It follows that the flag must be made of khaddar, for it is through coarse cloth alone that we can make India independent of foreign markets for her cloth. I would advise all religious organizations, if they agree with my argument, to weave into their religious flags, as for instance the Khilafat, a miniature national flag in the upper left-hand corner. The regulation size of the flag should contain the drawing of a full-sized spinning wheel."

The critics ridiculed Gandhi's programme. "The year will soon pass away, and our actions, more than words, will demonstrate the meaning of non-co-operation," wrote Gandhi in *Young India* dated April 20. "For me non-co-operation is not suspended, and never will be, so long as the Government has not purged itself of the crimes against India—the Musalmans and the Punjabis—and so long as the system is not changed to respond to the will of the nation. Surely it was necessary to remove the hallucination about titles, law courts, schools and councils. I think that on the whole the nationalists have responded nobly in regard to these items. There are now no titled men among them, no nationalist lawyer who has not suspended practice has any public status among non-co-operators, schools and colleges have furnished boys and girls who are now giving a good account of themselves and who, I make bold to say, will stagger humanity by their sacrifice when the time of their trial has arrived. Those who have refrained from entering the councils are rendering, as all may see, a service which they could not have rendered in the council halls. The few who have given up their titles have shown the way to the others. All these are acting as leaven in the

community. Now, there is little need for verbal propaganda among these special classes. The action and character of those who have renounced titles, schools, courts or councils, constitute a propaganda more telling and effective than speeches. National schools are multiplying themselves, boys are still leaving schools and colleges. The Government statistics are hopelessly wrong. I remember having seen a councillor quoting that less than 3,000 students had left educational institutions. This takes no count of thousands who are studying in nationalized schools. The number of suspensions of practice is also steadily growing. Even titles are still being surrendered. And as the timid or the cautious realize that the non-co-operation movement is a serious and a religious effort, that it has taken permanent hold of the people, they too will renounce.

"I should not be surprised if the history of the South African movement repeats itself in India. I refuse to believe that India will do less. To recall Lord Canning's words, under the blue and serene Indian sky a cloud no bigger than a man's thumb may appear on the horizon, but it may any moment assume dimensions unexpected by any, and no man can tell when it may burst. When India as a whole will respond by action, I cannot say. But this I do say that the educated classes of India to whom the Congress has appealed will one day—and probably during this year—respond in a manner worthy of the nation.

"But whether they do or not, the progress of the nation cannot be arrested by any person or class. The uneducated artisans, the women, the men in the street, are taking their share in the movement. The appeal to the educated classes paved the way for them. The goats had to be sifted from the sheep. The educated classes had to be put upon their trial. The beginning had to be made by and through them. Non-co-operation has hitherto, thank God, followed its natural course.

"Swadeshi propaganda in its intensive and exclusive form had to come and it has come in its order. It was, and is part in the non-co-operation programme. It is, I claim, the biggest, the safest, and the surest part. It could not be taken up earlier in its present form. The country had to see its way clear to the spinning wheel. It had to be purged of the old superstitions and prejudices. The country had to appreciate the futility of the boycott of British goods merely, equally of all foreign goods. It had to see that it lost its liberty by

giving up swadeshi in cloth and that it could regain it by reverting to hand-spun and hand-woven cloth. It had to see that it lost its artistic taste and talent, when it innocently ceased to spin and weave by the hand. It had to see that it was not even so much the military drain, as the loss of this supplementary industry that sapped India's vitality and made famines as ever recurring event in Indian life. Men with faith in the wheel had to rise in every province, and people had to appreciate the beauty and the use of khaddar.

"All these things have now happened. The crore men and women and the crore rupees are required to resuscitate this national *dharma.* The problem is not that of a few charkhas but of putting charkhas in every one of the six crore homes. The problem is that of manufacturing and distributing the whole of the cloth required by India. It cannot be done by one crore rupees. If India gives one crore rupees, and one crore men and women, and introduces two million charkhas in working order in as many homes before the 30th June, she is nearly ready for swaraj. Because the effort will have created, in the nation as a whole, all the qualities that make a nation good, great, self-reliant and self-contained. When the nation has, by a voluntary effort, completed its boycott of foreign cloth, it will be ready for swaraj. Then I promise that the various forts in the Indian cities will, instead of being an insolent menace to the freedom of India, become playgrounds for her children. Then the relations between Englishmen and ourselves will have been purified. Then the Lancashire vote will have been sterilized. And Englishmen will, if they choose, remain in India as friends and equals, with one sole aim—truly of benefiting and helping India. Non-co-operation is a movement intended to invite Englishmen to co-operate with us on honourable terms or retire from our land. It is a movement to place our relations on a pure basis, to define them in a manner consistent with our self-respect and dignity.

"But call the movement by any other name. Call it 'swadeshi and temperance'. Assume that all these previous months have been a waste of effort. I invite the Government and the moderate friends to co-operate with the nation in making hand-spinning universal and in making drinking a crime. Neither party need speculate as to the result of these two movements. The tree will be judged by its fruit."

## *Hasten Slowly*

1921

THE NEW programme and policy inaugurated by Gandhi marked a giant's advance for the Congress. It now stood out as a powerful political party leading the masses in the struggle for attainment of national freedom. The success of the programme was demonstrated not only in the rapid development of the non-co-operation movement but in the accompanying forms of mass struggle in many parts of the country. The Akali peasants rebelled against the Government-protected rich *mohants* in the Punjab. In March 1921 peaceful Sikh pilgrims assembled in a gurudwara were suddenly pounced upon and several were shot down. The Akali movement was a child of the general awakening in the country.

In April the peasantry of Mulsi threatened to resort to satyagraha if their grievances were not listened to. Gandhi taking the side of the poor against the house of Tatas wrote:

"My heart goes out to these poor people. I wish the great house of Tatas, instead of standing on their legal rights, will reason with the people themselves and do whatever they wish in consultation with them. What is the value of all boons that the Tata scheme claims to confer upon India, if it is to be at the unwilling expense of even one poor man? I dare say the problem of disease and poverty can be easily solved, and the survivors will live in luxury if the three crore half-starved men and women, and lakhs of the decrepit humanity were shot and their bodies utilized for manure or their bones utilized for making knife-handles. And yet no one but a lunatic will put up such a suggestion. Is the case any weaker when men and women are not to be shot but compulsorily dispossessed of their valued lands about which sentiment, romance, and all that makes life worth living have grown up? I suggest to the custodians of the great name that they would more truly advance India's interest if they will defer to the wishes of their weak and helpless countrymen."

The villagers of Chirala Perala refused to have municipality meant only for collecting taxes. In their support Gandhi wrote: "The brave people of Chirala Perala have challenged the Government to do its worst and refused to have a municipality. They need not have done so. They might have waited for swaraj. But they chose to do otherwise. The responsibility is entirely theirs. They may not now yield in any circumstance whatsoever. Nor must they under provocation lose their heads. They must cheerfully let the Government subject them to any penalty it chooses to inflict upon them. By their meek and unyielding suffering they will cover themselves and India with glory and will give an object-lesson to the country in non-violence."

The spirit of militancy spread among the workers. In May, 12,000 labourers struck work in Assam tea gardens. Discontent spread all over India and the workers on the Eastern Bengal Railway brought transport to a standstill. In 1921 there were 400 strikes affecting half a million workers.

Despite the policy of non-violence there were signs of violence in certain parts of the country. To Gandhi it amounted to sabotage of his cherished campaign. On May 4 he wrote:

"If the facts reported in the papers are substantially correct, Malegaon non-co-operators have been false to their creed and their faith and their country. They have put back the hands of the clock of progress. Non-violence is the rock on which the whole structure of non-co-operation is built. Take that away and every act of renunciation comes to naught, as artificial fruit is no more than a showy nothing. The murder of the men who were evidently doing their duty was, if the report is correct, deliberate. It was a very cowardly attack. Certain men wilfully broke the law, and invited punishment. There could be no justification for resentment of such imprisonment. Those who commit violence of the Malegaon type are the real co-operators with the Government. The latter will gladly lose a few officers if thereby they could kill non-co-operation. A few more such murders and we shall forfeit the sympathy of the masses. I am convinced that the people will not tolerate violence on our part. They are by nature peaceful, they have welcomed non-co-operation because it is deliberately non-violent."

The political situation was so intense that Lord Reading, the Viceroy, called Gandhi for an interview at Simla in the middle of May. "Rather exciting days lately," Lord Reading wrote to his son.

"Intermediaries have stepped in with a view to bringing about a meeting with Gandhi." He accepted the Viceroy's invitation. Many correspondents objected. Had he become a co-operator, they asked. He replied: "We may attack measures and systems. We may not, we must not, attack men. Imperfect ourselves, we must be tender towards others and be slow to impute motives. I, therefore, gladly seized the opportunity of waiting upon His Excellency."

The Viceroy wrote to his son that he had six talks with Gandhi, "the first of four hours and a half, the second of three hours, the third of an hour and a half, the fourth of an hour and a half, the fifth of an hour and a half, and the sixth of three quarters of an hour; I have had many opportunities of judging him... There is nothing striking about his appearance. . . and I should have passed him by in the street without a second look at him. When he talks, the impression is different. He is direct, and expresses himself well in excellent English with a fine appreciation of the value of the words he uses. There is no hesitation about him, there is a ring of sincerity in all that he utters, save when discussing some political questions. His religious views are, I believe, genuinely held, and he is convinced to a point, almost bordering on fanaticism, that non-violence and love will give India its independence and enable it to withstand the British Government. His religious and moral views are admirable and indeed are on a remarkably high altitude, though I must confess that I find it difficult to understand his practice of them in politics. . . Our conversations were of the frankest; he was supremely courteous, with manners of distinction. . . He held in every way to his word in the various discussions we had."

Four main topics were discussed at these meetings: the Punjab disturbances of 1919 and their aftermath; the Treaty of Sèvres; the meaning of swaraj; Gandhi's attitude in the event of an Afghan invasion of India. The Viceroy incidentally drew Gandhi's attention to the speeches of the Ali brothers as falsifying the view of the movement put forward by Gandhi. Gandhi agreed that a misconstruction of their speeches was possible and secured from the Ali brothers a statement repudiating all incitement to violence. He said, "We who are fighting the battle for freedom and truth, must be most exact in our language."

Critics tried to drive a wedge between the Ali brothers and Gandhi by giving currency to a concocted statement that the brothers

would help the Amir of Afghanistan if he were to invade India. Gandhi said: "I do not believe that the Afghans want to invade India. I believe that the Government is fully prepared to meet an Afghan invasion. I hold it to be contrary to the faith of a non-co-operator to render unconditional assistance to a Government which he seeks to end or mend. I would rather see India perish at the hands of the Afghans than purchase freedom from Afghan invasion at the cost of her honour. It is the duty of every non-co-operator to let the Afghans know that India does not want their intervention."

He added: "However, I warn the reader against believing in the bogy of an Afghan invasion. Their own military writers have often let us into the secret that many of the punitive expeditions were manufactured for giving the soldiers a training or keeping idle armed men occupied. A weak, disarmed, credulous India does not know how this Government has kept her under its hypnotic spell. Even some of the best of us believe that the military budget is being piled up for protecting India against foreign aggression. I suggest that it is being piled up for want of faith in the Sikhs, the Gurkhas, the Pathans, and the Rajputs, that is, for want of faith in us and for the purpose of keeping us under forced subjection. My belief is that the anxiety of the Government always to have a treaty with the Amir was based, not so much upon the fear of a Russian invasion as upon the fear of losing the confidence of the Indian soldiery. Today there is certainly no fear of a Russian invasion. I have never believed in the Bolshevik menace. And why should any Indian Government, to use the favourite phrase of the erstwhile idol of Bengal, 'broad-based upon a people's affection', fear Russian, Bolshevik or any menace? Surely a contented, and a powerful India (all the more) in alliance with Great Britain can any day meet any invasion upon her. But this Government has deliberately emasculated us, kept us under the perpetual fear of our neighbours and the whole world, and drained India of her splendid resources so that she has lost faith in herself either for defence or dealing with the simple problem of the growing poverty. I, therefore, do certainly hope that the Amir will not enter into any treaty with this Government. Any such treaty can only mean bargain against Islam and India. This Government being unwilling to part with O'Dwyerism as an 'emergency' measure, being unwilling to keep its faith with the Muslims—I must decline to treat the Government

of India separately from the Imperial Government—and being unwilling to let India rise to her full height, wants Afghanistan to enter into a treaty of offence against India. I hope that there is but one opinion so far as non-co-operators are concerned. Whilst unwilling ourselves, we cannot certainly wish others to co-operate with the Government."

Under "Hindu-Muslim Unity", he wrote: "I know that there is much distrust of one another as yet. Many Hindus distrust Musalman honesty. They believe that swaraj means Musalman raj, for they argue that without the British, Musalmans of India will aid Musalman powers to build up a Musalman empire in India. Musalmans on the other hand fear that the Hindus being in an overwhelming majority will smother them. Such an attitude of mind betokens impotence on either's part. If not their nobility, their desire to live in peace would dictate a policy of mutual trust and mutual forbearance. There is nothing in either religion to keep the two apart. The days of forcible conversion are gone. Save for the cow Hindus can have no ground for quarrel with Musalmans. They are under no religious obligation to slaughter a cow. The fact is we have never before now endeavoured to come together, to adjust our differences and to live as friends bound to one another as children of the same sacred soil. We have both now an opportunity of a lifetime. The Khilafat question will not recur for another hundred years. If the Hindus wish to cultivate eternal friendship with the Musalmans, they must perish with them in the attempt to vindicate the honour of Islam."

Some critics considered Gandhi a dreamer and his method unpractical. Tagore condemned the non-co-operation movement on spiritual grounds. From Europe he expressed his anxiety to friends in India and three of his letters appeared in *Modern Review*. The controversy between Tagore and Gandhi was marked by mutual esteem. Tagore said: "We need all the moral force which Mahatma Gandhi represents, and which he alone in the world can represent." The wasting of the spiritual resources in the problems which, when considered in the light of abstract moral truth, are unworthy, is to be regretted. "It is criminal to transform moral force into force." And although Tagore admired Gandhi's gospel of self-sacrifice, he hated the element of negation contained in non-co-operation. "My prayer is that India may represent the co-operation of all the peoples

of the world. For India, unity is truth, and division evil. Unity is that which embraces and understands everything; consequently, it cannot be attained through negation. The present attempt to separate our spirit from that of the Occident is a tentative of spiritual suicide . . . The present age has been dominated by the Occident, because the Occident has a mission to fulfil. We of the Orient should learn from the Occident. The problem is a world problem. No nation can find its own salvation by breaking away from others. We must all be saved or we must all perish together."

To Tagore's interpretation of India's message, Gandhi's reply was respectful but firm:

"I would like to assure him and India that non-co-operation in conception is not any of the things he fears, and he need have no cause to be ashamed of his country for having adopted non-co-operation. If in actual application it appears in the end to have failed it will be no more the fault of the doctrine than it would be of truth, if those who claim to apply it in practice do not appear to succeed. Non-co-operation may have come in advance of its time. India and the world must then wait. But there is no choice for India save between violence and non-co-operation.

"Nor need the poet fear that non-co-operation is intended to erect a Chinese wall between India and the West. On the contrary, non-co-operation is intended to pave the way to real, honourable and voluntary co-operation based on mutual respect and trust. The present struggle is being waged against compulsory co-operation, against one-sided combination, against armed imposition of modern methods of exploitation masquerading under the name of civilization.

"Non-co-operation is a protest against an unwitting and unwilling participation in evil.

"The poet's concern is largely about the students. He is of opinion that they should not have been called upon to give up government schools before they had other schools to go to. Here I differ from him. I have never been able to make a fetish of literary training. My experience has proved to my satisfaction that literary training by itself adds not an inch to one's moral height and that character-building is independent of literary training. I am firmly of opinion that the government schools have unmanned us, rendered us helpless and godless. They have filled us with discontent, and providing no remedy for the discontent, have made us despondent. They have

made us what we were intended to become—clerks and interpreters. A government builds its prestige upon the apparently voluntary association of the governed. And if it was wrong to co-operate with the Government in keeping us slaves, we were bound to begin with those institutions in which our association appeared to be most voluntary. The youth of a nation are its hope. I hold that as soon as we discovered that the system of government was wholly, or mainly evil, it became sinful for us to associate our children with it.

"The poet's protest against the calling of the boys is really a corollary to his objection to the very doctrine of non-co-operation. He has a horror of everything negative. His whole soul seems to rebel against the negative commandments of religion. In my opinion, rejection is as much an ideal as the acceptance of a thing. It is as necessary to reject untruth as it is to accept truth. All religions teach that two opposite forces act upon us and that the human endeavour consists in a series of eternal rejections and acceptances. Non-co-operation with evil is as much a duty as co-operation with good. I venture to suggest that the poet has done an unconscious injustice to Buddhism in describing *nirvana* as merely a negative state. I make bold to say that *mukti* (emancipation) is as much a negative state as *nirvana*...The final word of the Upanishads (Brahmavidya) is 'not'. *Neti* was the best description the authors of the Upanishads were able to find for Brahman.

"I, therefore, think that the poet has been unnecessarily alarmed at the negative aspect of non-co-operation. We had lost the power of saying 'no'. It had become disloyal, almost sacrilegious to say 'no' to the Government. This deliberate refusal to co-operate is like the necessary weeding process that a cultivator has to resort to before he sows. Weeding is as necessary to agriculture as sowing. And, indeed, even whilst the crops are growing, the weeding fork, as every husbandman knows, is an instrument almost of daily use. The nation's non-co-operation is an invitation to the Government to co-operate with it on its own terms as is every nation's right and every good government's duty. Non-co-operation is the nation's notice that it is no longer satisfied to be in tutelage. The nation has taken to the harmless, (for it) natural and religious doctrine of non-co-operation in the place of the unnatural and irreligious doctrine of violence. And if India is to attain the swaraj of the poet's dream, she will do so only by non-violent non-co-operation. Let him deliver

his message of peace to the world and feel confident that India through her non-co-operation, if she remains true to her pledge, will have exemplified his message. Non-co-operation is intended to give the very meaning to patriotism that the poet is yearning after. An India prostrate at the feet of Europe can give no hope to humanity. An India awakened and free has a message of peace and goodwill to a groaning world. Non-co-operation is designed to supply her with a platform from which she will preach the message."

Though Gandhi stood for non-co-operation he believed that even co-operators could serve the country by adopting his constructive programme. In an appeal to the Liberals, he wrote:

"If you concede to the non-co-operators the same credit for the love of the land that you will claim for yourselves, will you not view with favour those parts of the programme on which there cannot be two opinions? I refer to the drink evil. I ask you to accept my evidence, that the country as a whole is sick of the drink curse. Those unfortunate men, who have become slaves to this habit, require to be helped against themselves. Some of them even ask to be helped. I invite you to take advantage of the wave of feeling that has been roused against the drink traffic. The agitation arose spontaneously. Believe me, the deprivation to the Government of the drink revenue is of the least importance in the campaign. The country is simply impatient of the evil itself. In no country in the world, will it be possible to carry on this traffic in the face of the united and enlightened opposition of a people, such as is now to be witnessed in India. Whatever the errors or excesses that were committed by the mob in Nagpur, the cause was just. The people were determined to do away with the drink curse that was sapping their vitality. You will not be deceived by the specious argument that India must not be made sober by compulsion, and that those who wish to drink must have facilities provided for them. The state does not cater for the vices of its people. We do not regulate or license houses of ill fame. We do not provide facilities for thieves to indulge in their propensity for thieving. I hold drink to be more damnable than thieving and perhaps even prostitution. Is it not often the parent of both? I ask you to join the country in sweeping out of existence the drink revenue and abolishing the liquor shops. Many liquor-sellers would gladly close their shops, if the money paid by them were refunded.

" 'What about the education of the children,' may be the question asked. I venture to suggest to you, that it is a matter of deep humiliation for the country to find its children educated from the drink revenue. We shall deserve the curse of posterity, if we do not wisely decide to stop the drink evil, even though we may have to sacrifice the education of our children. But we need not. I know many of you have laughed at the idea of making education self-supporting by introducing spinning in our schools and colleges. I assure you that it solves the problem of education as nothing else can. The country cannot bear fresh taxation. Even the existing taxation is unbearable. Not only must we do away with the opium and the drink revenue, but the other revenue has also to be very considerably reduced if the ever-growing poverty of the masses of India is to be combated in the near future.

"A complete revolution is the greatest need of the time. The word 'revolution' displeases you. What I plead for, however, is not a bloody revolution, but a revolution of the standard of life in the higher services of the country . . . You now belong to the governing class. Let it not be said that your heels are no softer than your predecessors' or your associates'. A new spirit has been born in the country. The fear of the judge within is more terrible than that of the one without. If the country can get your assistance in stopping the drink traffic, you will certainly add to the many services that you have rendered it in the past, and, may be, that one step will open your eyes to many another possibility."

Under "Confession of Faith", he wrote on July 13:

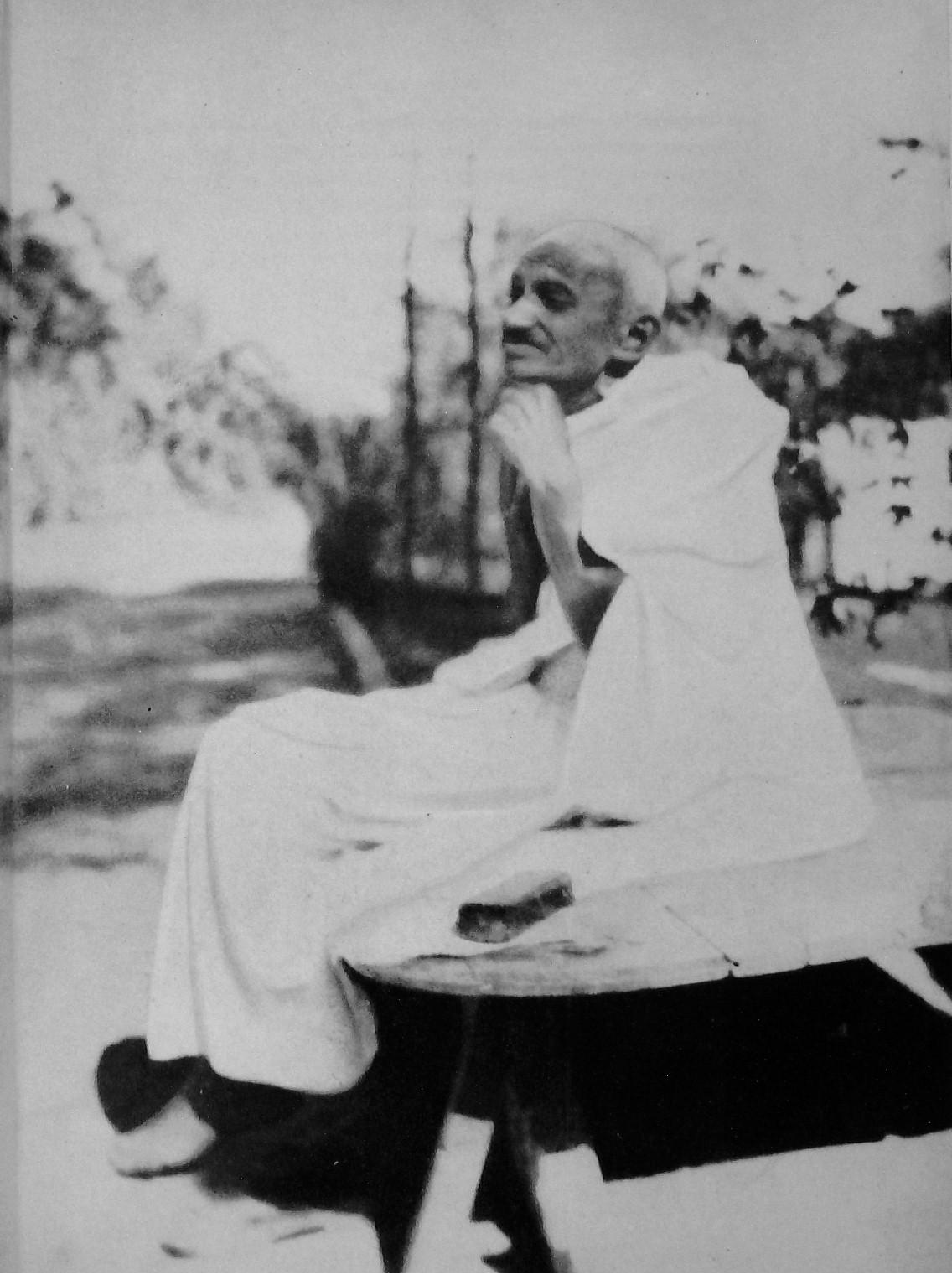
"A strange anonymous letter has been received by me, admiring me for having taken up a cause that was dearest to Lokamanya's heart, telling me that his spirit was residing in me and that I must prove a worthy follower of his. The letter, moreover, admonishes me not to lose heart in the prosecution of the swaraj programme, and finishes off by accusing me of imposture in claiming to be politically a disciple of the late Gokhale. I wish correspondents will throw off the slavish habit of writing anonymously. We, who are developing the swaraj spirit, must cultivate the courage of fearlessly speaking out our mind. The subject-matter of the letter, however, being of public importance, demands a reply. I cannot claim the honour of being a follower of the late Lokamanya. I admire him like millions of his countrymen for his indomitable will, his vast

learning, his love of country, and above all the purity of his private life and great sacrifice. Of all the men of modern times, he captivated most the imagination of his people. He breathed into us the spirit of swaraj. No one perhaps realized the evil of the existing system of Government as Mr. Tilak did. And in all humility I claim to deliver his message to the country as truly as the best of his disciples. But I am conscious that my method is not Mr. Tilak's method. And that is why I have still difficulty with some of the Maharashtra leaders. But I sincerely think that Mr. Tilak did not disbelieve my method. I enjoyed the privilege of his confidence. And his last word to me in the presence of several friends was, just a fortnight before his death, that mine was an excellent method if the people could be persuaded to take to it. But he said he had doubts. I know no other method; I can only hope that, when the final test comes, the country will be proved to have assimilated method of non-violent non-co-operation. Nor am I unaware of my limitations. I can lay no claim to scholarship. I have not his powers of organization, I have no compact disciplined party to lead, and having been an exile for twenty-three years, I cannot claim the experience that the Lokamanya had of India. Two things we had in common to the fullest measure—love of the country and the steady pursuit of swaraj. I can assure the anonymous writer that, yielding to none in my reverence for the memory of the deceased, I will march side by side with the foremost of the Lokamanya's disciples in the pursuit of swaraj.

"Discipleship, however, is a sacred and personal matter. I fell at Dadabhai's feet in 1888, but he seemed to be too far away from me. I could be as son to him, not disciple. A disciple is more than son. Discipleship is a second birth. It is a voluntary surrender. In 1896 I met almost all the known leaders of India in connection with my South African mission. Justice Ranade awed me. I could hardly talk in his presence. Badrudin Tyabji fathered me, and asked me to be guided by Ranade and Pherozeshah. The latter became a patron. His will had to be law. He taught me to take orders. He did not make me his disciple. He did not even try . . .

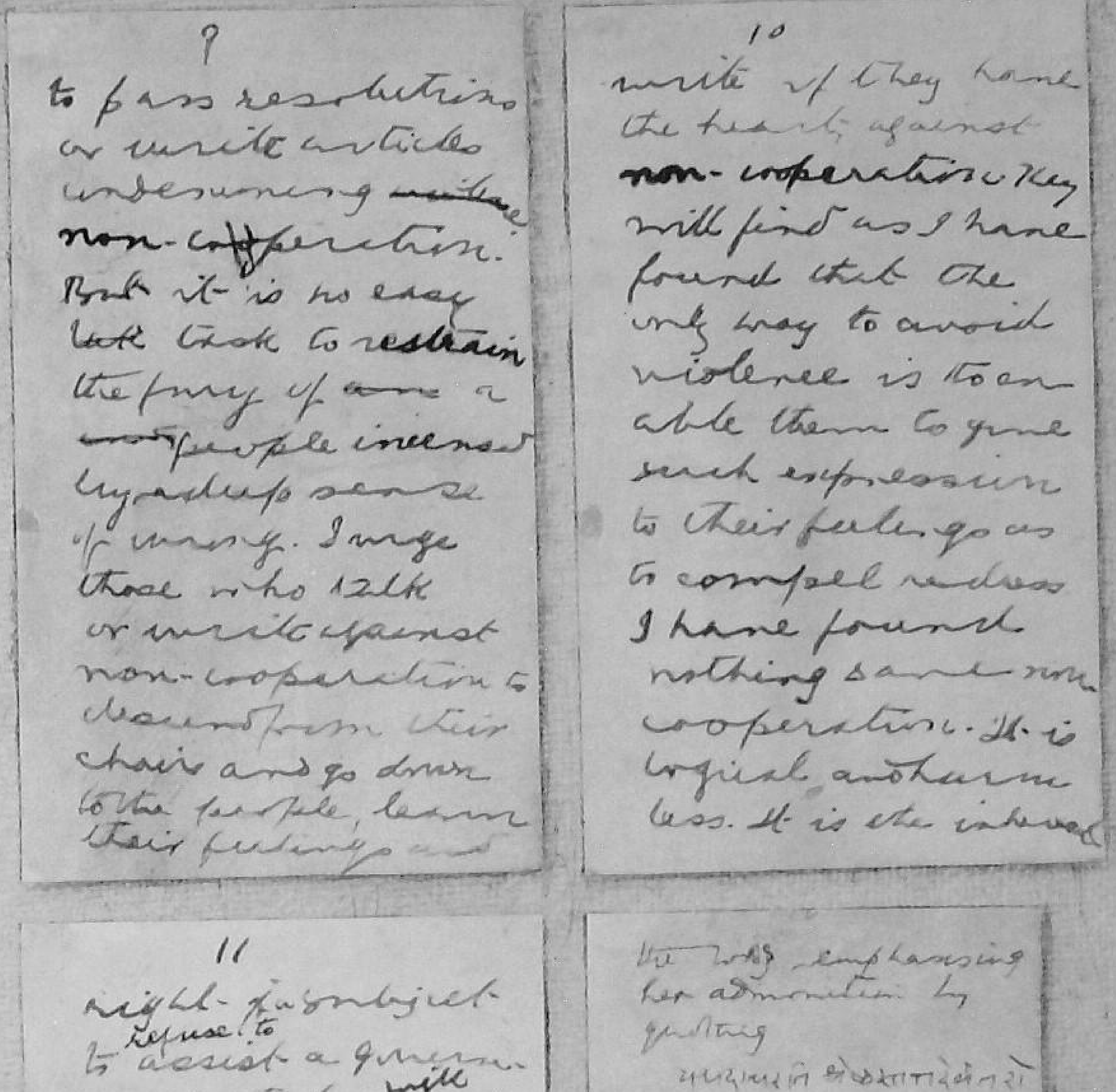
"I worshipped Dr. Bhandarkar with his wise face. But I could not find for him a place on that little throne. It was still unoccupied. I had many heroes, but no king.

"It was different with Gokhale, I cannot say why. I met him at his quarters on the college ground. It was like meeting an old friend, or



*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi shaving without a mirror, Sabarmati Ashram, 1921



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to pass resolutions or write articles condemning non-co-operation. But it is no easy task to restrain the fury of a people incensed by a deep sense of wrong. I urge those who talk or write against non-co-operation to descend from their chairs and go down to the people, learn their feelings and

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write if they have the heart against non-co-operation. They will find as I have found that the only way to avoid violence is to enable them to give such expression to their feelings as to compel redress. I have found nothing save non-co-operation. It is logical and harmless. It is the inherent

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right of a subject to refuse to assist a government that will not listen to him.

Non-co-operation as a voluntary movement can only succeed, if the feeling is genuine and strong enough to make people suffer to the utmost. If the religious sentiments of the Mahomedans is deeply hurt and if the Hindus

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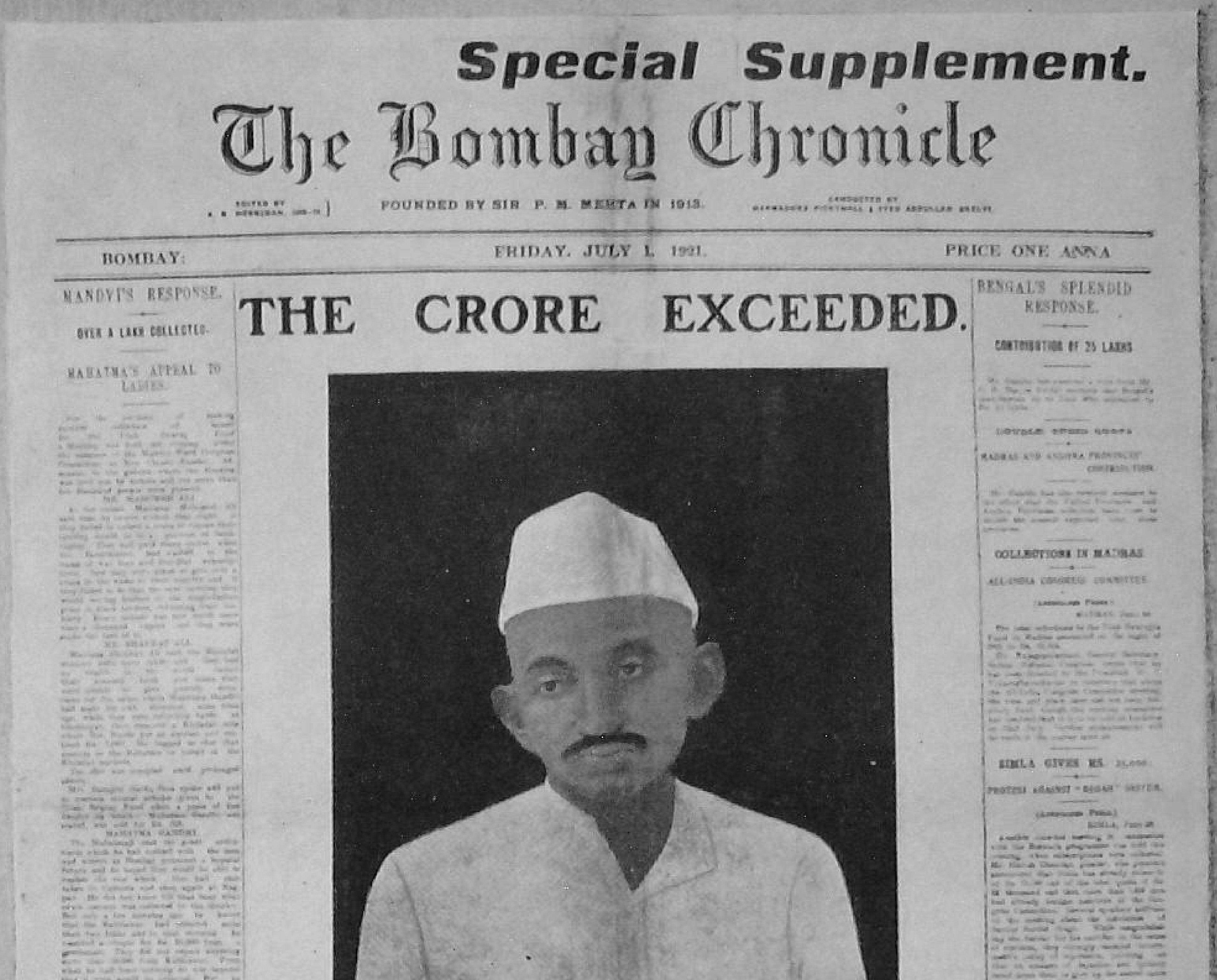
Courtesy: Girdhari Kripalani

Pages from Gandhi's manuscript of the article, "How to work Non-co-operation", in *Young India*, May 5, 1921; a page from his manuscript of another article



**Special Supplement.**

# The Bombay Chronicle

FOUNDED BY SIR P. M. MEHTA IN 1913.

BOMBAY: FRIDAY, JULY 1, 1921. PRICE ONE ANNA

MANDVI'S RESPONSE.

BENGAL'S SPLENDID RESPONSE.

## THE CRORE EXCEEDED.

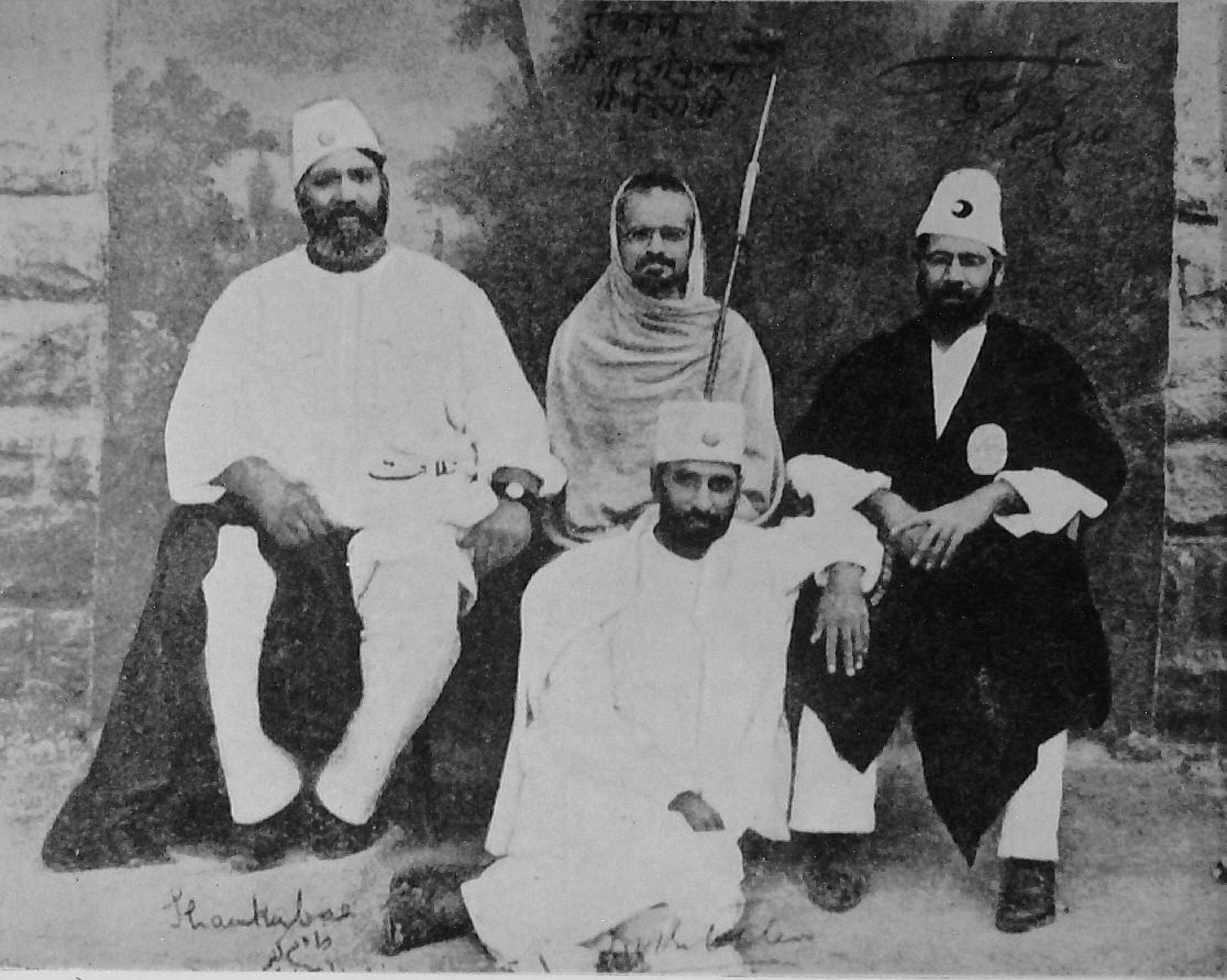
INDIA'S "MIRACLE-WORKER."

BENGAL GIVES 25 LAKHS.

According to the latest information, the crore that Mahatma Gandhi asked the country to contribute to the Tilak Swaraj Fund has been exceeded, Bengal's contribution amounting to Rs. 25 lakhs.

*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Successful drive for the collection of one crore of rupees for the Tilak Swaraj Fund



*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Historic picture of the accused in the famous Karachi Trial : Shaukat Ali, Shankaracharya of the Sharada Pith, Mahomed Ali and Dr. Kitchlew

better still, a mother after a long separation. His gentle face put me at ease in a moment. His minute inquiries about myself and my doings in South Africa at once enshrined him in my heart. And as I parted from him, I said to myself, 'You are my man.' In 1901, on my second return from South Africa, we came closer still. He simply 'took me in hand', and began to fashion me. He was concerned about how I spoke, dressed, walked and ate. My mother was not more solicitous about me than Gokhale. There was no reserve between us. It was really a case of love at first sight, and it stood the severest strain in 1913. He seemed to me all I wanted as a political worker—pure as crystal, gentle as a lamb, brave as a lion and chivalrous to a fault. It does not matter to me that he may not have been any of these things. It was enough for me that I could discover no fault in him to cavil at. He was and remains for me the most perfect man on the political field. Not that we had no differences. We differed even in 1901 in our views on social customs, namely, widow remarriage. We discovered differences in our estimate of western civilization. He frankly differed from me in my extreme views on non-violence. But these differences mattered neither to him nor to me. Nothing could put us asunder. It were blasphemous to conjecture what would have happened if he were alive today. I know that I would have been working under him. I have made this confession because the anonymous letter hurt me, when it accused me of imposture about my political discipleship. Had I been remiss in my acknowledgement to him who is now dumb? I thought that I must declare my faithfulness to Gokhale, especially when I seemed to be living in a camp which the Indian world calls opposite."

Gandhi appealed to Englishmen to understand his campaign. He used sweet reasonableness to convince the individual citizen of Britain that India's cry was for justice. On July 19 Gandhi wrote in *Young India*:

"This is the second time I venture to address you. I know that most of you detest non-co-operation. But I would invite you to isolate two of my activities from the rest, if you can give me credit for honesty.

"I cannot prove my honesty, if you do not feel it. Some of my Indian friends charge me with camouflage, when I say we need not hate Englishmen, whilst we may hate the system they have established. I am trying to show them that one may detest the wickedness

of a brother without hating him. Jesus denounced the wickedness of the Scribes and the Pharisees, but he did not hate them. He did not enunciate this law of love for the man and hate for the evil in him for himself only, but he taught the doctrine for universal practice. Indeed, I find it in all the scriptures of the world.

"I claim to be a fairly accurate student of human nature and vivisector of my own failings. I have discovered that man is superior to the system he propounds. And so I feel that you as an individual are infinitely better than the system you have evolved as a corporation. Each one of my countrymen in Amritsar on that fateful tenth of April was better than the crowd of which he was a member. He, as a man, would have declined to kill those innocent English bank managers. But in that crowd, many a man forgot himself. Hence it is, that an Englishman in office is different from an Englishman outside. Similarly an Englishman in India is different from an Englishman in England. Here in India, you belong to a system that is vile beyond description. It is possible, therefore, for me to condemn the system in the strongest terms, without considering you to be bad and without imputing bad motives to every Englishman. You are as much slaves of the system as we are. I want you, therefore, to reciprocate, and not impute to me motives which you cannot read in the written word. I give you the whole of my motive when I tell you that I am impatient to end or mend a system which has made India subservient to a handful of you and which has made Englishmen feel secure only in the shadow of the forts and the guns that obtrude themselves on one's notice in India. It is a degrading spectacle for you and for us. Our corporate life is based on mutual distrust and fear. This, you will admit, is unmanly. A system that is responsible for such a state of things is necessarily satanic. You should be able to live in India as an integral part of its people and not always as foreign exploiters. One thousand Indian lives against one English life is a doctrine of dark despair, and yet, believe me, it was enunciated in 1919 by the highest of you in the land.

"I almost feel tempted to invite you to join me in destroying a system that has dragged both you and us down. But I feel I cannot as yet do so. We have not shown ourselves earnest, self-sacrificing and self-restrained enough for that consummation. But I do ask you to help us in the boycott of foreign cloth and in the anti-drink campaign."

Meanwhile Gandhi continued more and more intensively his campaign for the unity of India. He tried to unite all religions, races, castes and parties. He called upon the Parsis, the prosperous merchant class, more or less tainted, as he expressed it, with the spirit of Rockefeller, and he called upon Hindus and Muslims to form a solid block. He tried to unite all races and creeds in friendship. His supreme efforts were given to the regeneration of the suppressed classes. He had the joy of seeing his appeal find echo in the hearts of the people.

With equal alacrity Gandhi espoused the cause of women. He published complaints of Hindu women at the degrading attitude of Hindu nationalists. Their protest, he said, proved that there was another sore in India as bad as that of untouchability. He called upon women to demand and inspire respect by ceasing to think of themselves as the objects of masculine desire only. "She must refuse to adorn herself for men including her husband, if she will be an equal partner with man." Let women forget their bodies and enter into public life, assume the risks, and suffer the consequences of their convictions. Instead of asking for mercy, women should vie with men in suffering for the cause.

Nor did he forget the fallen sisters. He spoke to them nobly, and they replied, confided in him, and asked his advice. He said:

"The first occasion I had of meeting those women who earn their livelihood out of their shame was at Cocanada in Andhra Province. The second occasion was at Barisal. Over one hundred of them met me by appointment. They had sent a letter in advance, asking for an interview and telling me that they had become members of the Congress and subscribed to the Swaraj Fund, but could not understand my advice not to seek office in various Congress committees. They wound up by saying that they wished to seek my advice as to their future welfare. The gentleman who handed me the letter did so with great hesitation, not knowing whether I would be offended or pleased with the receipt of the letter. I put him at ease by assuring him that it was my duty to serve these sisters if I could in any way. For me the two hours I spent with these sisters is a treasured memory. I hung my head in shame before these hundred sisters. Some of them were elderly, most were between twenty and thirty, and two or three were girls below twelve. That these women should have considered their lot to be beyond repair, was like a stab in the living

flesh. And yet they were intelligent and modest. Their talk was dignified, their answers were clean and straight. And for the moment their determination was as firm as that of any satyagrahi. Eleven of them promised to give up their present life and take to spinning and weaving from the following day, if they received a helping hand. The others said they would take time to think for they did not wish to deceive me."

Then he turned to the men and called them to respect women:

"Of all the evils for which man has made himself responsible, none is so degrading, so shocking or so brutal as his abuse of the better half of humanity, the female sex, not the weaker sex. It is the nobler of the two, for it is the embodiment of sacrifice, silent suffering, humility, faith and knowledge. A woman's intuition has often proved truer than man's arrogant assumption of superior knowledge. There is method in putting Sita before Rama and Radha before Krishna. Let us not delude ourselves into the belief that this gambling in vice has a place in our evolution because it is rampant and in some cases even state-regulated in civilized Europe. Let us not also perpetuate the vice on the strength of Indian precedents. We should cease to grow the moment we cease to discriminate between virtue and vice, and slavishly copy the past which we do not fully know. We are proud heirs to all that was noblest and best in the bygone age. We must not dishonour our heritage by multiplying past errors. In a self-respecting India, is not every woman's virtue as much every man's concern as his own sister's? Swaraj means ability to regard every inhabitant of India as our own brother or sister."

Gandhi's concern for the neglected creatures embraced even the animal world. The zeal for all-round reform made him write on cow protection:

"Cow protection to me is one of the most wonderful phenomena in human evolution. It takes the human being beyond his species. The cow to me means the entire sub-human world. Man through the cow is enjoined to realize his identity with all that lives. Why the cow was selected for apotheosis is obvious to me. The cow was in India the best companion. She was the giver of plenty. Not only did she give milk, but she also made agriculture possible. The cow is a poem on pity. One reads pity in the gentle animal. She is the mother to millions of Indians. Protection of the cow means protection of the whole dumb creation of God. The ancient seer, whoever he

was, began with the cow. The appeal of the lower order of creation is all the more forcible because it is speechless. Cow protection is the gift of Hinduism to the world."

The succeeding months of 1921 were notable for the great stress put on the constructive side of the Congress activities. At the first meeting of the All-India Congress Committee, elected according to the new constitution, held at Bombay on July 28, attention was specially focussed upon attaining the complete boycott of all foreign cloth by the 30th September next and the manufacture of khaddar by stimulating hand-spinning and hand-weaving. The A.-I.C.C. further advised that "all persons belonging to the Congress shall discard the use of foreign cloth, as from the first day of August next." It was also part of the programme to collect foreign cloth from consumers for destruction, or use outside India at their option. Detailed instructions were issued to subordinate Congress organizations and all Congressmen for the successful achievement of that object. Resolutions were passed boycotting the forthcoming visit of the Prince of Wales, approving the picketing of liquor shops and deploring the mob excesses in Malabar and Malegaon.

Another important decision of the meeting was: "The All-India Congress Committee has taken note of the reasonable desire of workers in the United Provinces and other parts to take up civil disobedience in answer to the repressive measures of local governments and has also taken note of the fact that the administration in the North-West Frontier Province has even prohibited the entry into that province of the members of the Frontier Inquiry Committee appointed by the Central Khilafat Committee to inquire into the outrages alleged to have been committed by the local officials in Bannu. But with a view to ensure greater stability of non-violent atmosphere throughout India and in order to test the measure of influence attained by the Congress over the people and further in order to retain on the part of the nation an atmosphere free from ferment necessary for proper and swift prosecution of swadeshi, the All-India Congress Committee is of opinion that civil disobedience should be postponed till after the completion of the programme referred to in the resolution on swadeshi, after which the committee will not hesitate, if necessary, to recommend a course of civil disobedience even though it might have to be adopted by a special session of the Congress, provided, however, that it is open to any

province or place to adopt civil disobedience subject to the previous approval of the Working Committee obtained within the constitution through the provincial Congress committee concerned."

Events were moving fast. A fortnight before the A.-I.C.C. meeting, the All-India Khilafat Conference which met at Karachi under the presidentship of Maulana Mahomed Ali passed a fateful resolution: "The meeting proclaims that it is in every way religiously unlawful for the Muslims at the present moment to continue in the British Army or to induce others to join the army, and it is the duty of all the Musalmans in general and *Ulema* in particular to see that these religious commandments are brought home to every Muslim in the army and if no settlement is arrived at before Christmas regarding our campaign, Indian republic will be declared at the Ahmedabad session of the Congress."

"Hasten slowly" was Gandhi's persistent advice:

"Civil disobedience was on the lips of every one of the members of the All-India Congress Committee. Not having really ever tried it, every one appeared to be enamoured of it from a mistaken belief, in it was a sovereign remedy for our present-day ills. I feel sure that it can be made such if we can produce the necessary atmosphere for it. For individuals there always is that atmosphere except when their civil disobedience is certain to lead to bloodshed. But even so, a call may come which one dare not neglect, cost it what it may. I can see the time coming to me when I must refuse obedience to every single state-made law, even though there may be a certainty of bloodshed. When neglect of the call means a denial of God, civil disobedience becomes a peremptory duty.

"Mass civil disobedience stands on a different footing. It can only be tried in a calm atmosphere."

To create a congenial atmosphere for the campaign he advised: "We must dismiss the idea of overawing the Government by huge demonstrations every time some one is arrested. On the contrary we must treat arrest as the normal condition of the life of a non-co-operator. For we must seek arrest and imprisonment, as a soldier who goes to battle seeks death. We expect to bear down the opposition of the Government by courting and not by avoiding imprisonment, even though it be by showing our supposed readiness to be arrested and imprisoned *en masse*. Civil disobedience then emphatically means our desire to surrender to a single unarmed

policeman. Our triumph consists in thousands being led to prisons like lambs to the slaughter-house. If the lambs of the world had been willingly led, they would have long ago saved themselves from the butcher's knife. Our triumph consists again in being imprisoned for no wrong whatsoever. The greater our innocence, the greater our strength and the swifter our victory . . . The Government takes full advantage of our fear of gaols. If our men and women welcome gaols as health resorts, we will cease to worry about the dear ones put in gaols which our countrymen in South Africa used to nickname His Majesty's hotels.

"We have too long been mentally disobedient to the laws of the state and have too often surreptitiously evaded them, to be fit all of a sudden for civil disobedience. Disobedience to be civil has to be open and non-violent.

"Complete civil disobedience is a state of peaceful rebellion—a refusal to obey every single state-made law. It is certainly more dangerous than an armed rebellion. For it can never be put down if the civil resisters are prepared to face extreme hardships. It is based upon an implicit belief in the absolute efficiency of innocent suffering. By noiselessly going to prison a civil resister ensures a calm atmosphere. The wrongdoer wearies of wrongdoing in the absence of resistance. All pleasure is lost when the victim betrays no resistance. A full grasp of the conditions of successful civil resistance is necessary at least on the part of the representatives of the people before we can launch an enterprise of such magnitude. The quickest remedies are always fraught with the greatest danger and require the utmost skill in handling them. It is my firm conviction that if we bring a successful boycott of foreign cloth, we shall have produced an atmosphere that would enable us to inaugurate civil disobedience on a scale that no Government can resist. I would, therefore, urge patience and determined concentration on swadeshi upon those who are impatient to embark on mass civil disobedience."

July, August and September were to be devoted to concentrate people's attention on attaining complete boycott of foreign cloth. On July 31 Gandhi ceremoniously celebrated the bonfire of foreign cloth at Umar Sobani's yard at Parel—a spectacular scene witnessed by thousands of citizens. As the flame leapt up and enveloped the whole pyramid, there was a shout of great joy resounding through the air as if India's shackles had been broken asunder. It struck the

imagination of the people as nothing else could have. It was not rags that were burnt but some of the finest saris, shirts and jackets were consigned to the flames. In some cases choicest silks kept by mothers for their daughters' wedding were given up for burning. No less than one lakh and a half pieces were consigned to flames.

Addressing a huge meeting on the sands of Chowpati, on August 1, Gandhi said:

"Bombay the Beautiful lit yesterday a fire which must remain ever alive, even as in a Parsi temple, and which must continually burn all our pollutions, as yesterday we burnt our greatest outward pollution, our foreign clothing. Let it be a token of our determination never to touch foreign cloth. Untouchability of foreign cloth must be held to be a duty of every Hindu, Muslim, Jain, Sikh, Parsi, Christian, Jew and all other religious communities which have made India their home. Let it be a common necessary factor for all Indian creeds. Untouchability of foreign cloth is as much a virtue with all of us as untouchability of the suppressed classes must be a sin with every devout Hindu. It was, therefore, a noble sacrifice we made yesterday. Bombay qualified herself for celebrating Lokamanya's memory. Let us treasure the memory of his great self-sacrifice, his dauntless courage and his austere simplicity. He made patriotism a religion. Let us dedicate ourselves for realization of his dream of swaraj. No memorial less than swaraj can fittingly perpetuate his memory.

"And as I said yesterday, there is no deliverance for India without true swadeshi. It was the true and necessary sacrificial fire we lit yesterday at Parel.

"As with the outer, so with the inner. Yesterday's outward fire is a symbol of the inner fire that should burn up all our weaknesses of the head or the heart. Our purified reason must show us the true economics of swadeshi. Our purified hearts must make us strong to withstand the temptation of yielding to the charms of foreign cloth. Howsoever good it may be outside India, it is not good for India.

"If it was a true fire we lit yesterday, if it is a true homage we have met today to render to the memory of Lokamanya, we will take good care not to deceive ourselves or the nation. Khadi is on the fair way to become the state dress, it is not the foreign muslin that will henceforth deck our bodies on auspicious occasions, but the sacred khadi reminiscent not of sweated labour or the enforced idleness and pauperism of millions, but of the reviving poetry of the home life and

of the incoming prosperity of the poorest toiler. And if that is to be the significance of sacrament and today's demonstration on the very spot where a year ago the sacred remains of our deceased countryman were cremated, there must be no turning back upon our resolution, there must be no make-believe, no mere show. We must give up the use of foreign cloth once for all. We must realize that foreign cloth in our possession is valueless, even as the richest milk, if it is infected, is fit only to be thrown away. If we are no longer to wear foreign cloth, is it not so much burden locked up in our trunks? Do they not in Europe give up valuable things when they have gone out of fashion? I utter this word of caution at this early stage, because I know that many have given up only a part of their foreign clothing in the hope, evidently, that some day they might be able to wear what they kept. Collection of foreign cloth is not like collection of funds and jewellery of which only a part need be given by many. Collection of foreign cloth is like collection of refuse, every particle of which an industrious and careful housewife puts in the dustbin. Much depends upon our ability to revolutionize our taste for the tinsel splendour if the shops for the sale of foreign cloth are to be an exception in our bazars. Let us not hanker after imitations. If we do, we are likely to have fraudulent imitations of khadi from foreign markets. For the time being and during the transition period, the coarser and unwashed khadi is the best.

"I swear by swadeshi as it affords occasion for an ample exercise of all our faculties and as it tests every one of the millions of men and women, young and old. It can succeed only if India acts as one mind. And if India can do so in swadeshi, she will have learnt the secret of swaraj. She will then have mastered the art of destruction and construction in a scientific manner."

The bonfire lit in Bombay by Gandhi spread all over the land. The example was followed all over India. Gandhi's action evoked severe criticism even from some of his friends. Andrews wrote angrily: "I was supremely happy when you were dealing great giant blows at the great fundamental moral evils, drunkenness, drug-taking, untouchability, race arrogance, etc., and when you were, with such wonderful and beautiful tenderness, dealing with the hideous vice of prostitution. But lighting bonfires of foreign cloth and telling people it is a religious sin to wear it, destroying in the fire the noble handiwork of one's fellow men and women, one's brothers and

sisters abroad, saying it would be 'defiling' to wear it—I cannot tell you how different all this appears to me. Do you know I almost fear now to wear the khaddar that you have given me, lest I should appear to be judging other people as a Pharisee would, saying, 'I am holier than you.' I never felt like this before."

Gandhi's insistence on banishing foreign cloth from India was no fanaticism. He clearly stated:

"If the emphasis were on all foreign things, it would be racial, parochial and wicked. The emphasis is on all foreign cloth. The restriction makes all the difference in the world. I do not want to shut out English lever watches or the beautiful Japanese lacquer work. But I must destroy all the choicest wines of Europe, even though they might have been prepared and preserved with all the most exquisite care and attention. Satan's snares are most subtly laid and are the most tempting when the dividing line between right and wrong is so thin as to be imperceptible. But the line is there all the same, rigid and inflexible. Any crossing of it may mean certain death.

"India is racial today. It is with the utmost effort, that I find it possible to keep under check the evil passions of the people. The general body of the people are filled with ill will, because they are weak and hopelessly ignorant of the way to shed their weakness. I am transferring the ill will from men to things.

"Love of foreign cloth has brought foreign domination, pauperism and what is worst, shame to many a home. The reader may not know, that not long ago hundreds of 'untouchable' weavers of Kathiawad having found their calling gone, became sweepers for the Bombay municipality. And the life of these men has become so difficult that many lose their children and become physical and moral wrecks; some are helpless witnesses of the shame of their daughters and even their wives. The reader may not know, that many women of this class in Gujarat for want of domestic occupation have taken to work on public roads, where under pressure of one sort or another, they are obliged to sell their honour. The reader may not know, that the proud weavers of the Punjab, for want of occupation, not many years ago took to the sword, and were instrumental in killing the proud and innocent Arabs at the bidding of their officers, and not for the sake of their country but for the sake of their livelihood. It is difficult to make a successful appeal to these deluded hirelings and wean them from their murderous profession. What was once an honourable and

artistic calling is now held by them to be disreputable. The weavers of Dacca, when they wove the world-famous *subnum,* could not have been considered disreputable.

"Is it now any wonder, if I consider it a sin to touch foreign cloth? Will it not be a sin for a man with a very delicate digestive apparatus to eat rich foods? Must he not destroy them or give them away? I know what I would do with rich foods, if I had a son lying in bed who must not eat them but would still gladly have them. In order to wean him from the hankering, I would, though able to digest them myself, refrain from eating them and destroy them in his presence, so that the sin of eating may be borne home to him.

"If destruction of foreign cloth be a sound proposition from the moral standpoint, the possibility of a rise in the price of swadeshi cloth need not frighten us. Destruction is the quickest method of stimulating production. By one supreme effort and swift destruction, India has to be awakened from her torpor and enforced idleness. . . Foreign cloth to India is like foreign matter to the body. The destruction of the former is as necessary for the health of India as of the latter for the health of the body. Once grant the immediate necessity of swadeshi, and there is no half-way house to destruction.

"Nor need we be afraid, by evolving the fullest swadeshi spirit, of developing a spirit of narrowness and exclusiveness. We must protect our own bodies from disruption through indulgence, before we would protect the sanctity of others. India is today nothing but a dead mass movable at the will of another. Let her become alive by self-purification, that is, self-restraint and self-denial, and she will be a boon to herself and mankind. Let her be self-indulgent, aggressive, grasping, and if she rises she will do so like Kumbhakarna only to destroy and be a curse to herself and mankind.

"And for a firm believer in swadeshi, there need be no Pharisaical self-satisfaction in wearing khadi. A Pharisee is a patron of virtue. The wearer of khadi from a swadeshi standpoint is like a man making use of his lungs. A natural and obligatory act has got to be performed whether others do it out of impure motives or refrain altogether, as they did not believe in its necessity or utility."

In making swadeshi programme a success he made a fervent appeal to the women of India:

"Having given much, more is now required of you. Men bore the principal share of the subscriptions to the Tilak Swaraj Fund.

But completion of the swadeshi programme is possible only if you give the largest share. Boycott is impossible, unless you surrender the whole of your foreign clothing. So long as the taste persists, so long is complete renunciation impossible. And boycott means complete renunciation. We must be prepared to be satisfied with such cloth as India can produce, even as we are thankfully content with such children as God gives us. I have not known a mother throwing away her baby even though it may appear ugly to an outsider. So should it be with the women of India about Indian manufactures. And for you only hand-spun and hand-woven can be regarded as Indian manufactures. During the transition stage you can only get coarse khadi in abundance. You may add all the art to it that your taste allows or requires. And if you will be satisfied with coarse khadi for a few months, India need not despair of seeing a revival of the fine, rich and coloured garments of old which were once the envy and the despair of the world. I assure you that a six months' course of self-denial will show you that what we today regard as artistic is only falsely so, and that true art takes note not merely of form but also of what lies behind. There is an art that kills and an art that gives life. The fine fabric that we have imported from the West or the Far East has literally killed millions of our brothers and sisters, and delivered thousands of our dear sisters to a life of shame. True art must be evidence of happiness, contentment and purity of its authors. And if you will have such art revived in our midst, the use of khadi is obligatory on the best of you at the present moment.

"And not only is the use of khadi necessary for the success of the swadeshi programme, but it is imperative for every one of you to spin during your leisure hours. I have suggested to boys and men also that they should spin. Thousands of them, I know, are spinning daily. The main burden of spinning must, as of old, fall on your shoulders. Two hundred years ago, the women of India spun not only for home demand but also for foreign lands. They spun not merely coarse counts but the finest that the world has ever spun. No machine has yet reached the fineness of the yarn spun by our ancestors. If then we are to cope with the demand for khadi during the two months and afterwards, you must form spinning clubs, institute spinning competitions and flood the Indian market with hand-spun yarn. For this purpose some of you have to become experts in spinning, carding and

adjusting the spinning wheels. This means ceaseless toil. You will not look upon spinning as a means of livelihood. For the middle class it should supplement the income of the family, and for very poor women, it is undoubtedly a means of livelihood. The spinning wheel should be, as it was, the widow's loving companion. But for you who will read this appeal, it is presented as a duty, as *dharma*. If all the well-to-do women of India were to spin a certain quantity daily, they would make yarn cheap and bring about much more quickly than otherwise the required fineness.

"The economic and the moral salvation of India thus rests mainly with you. The future of India lies on your knees, for you will nurture the future generation. You can bring up the children of India to become simple, god-fearing and brave men and women, or you can coddle them to be weaklings unfit to brave the storms of life and used to foreign fineries which they would find it difficult in after-life to discard. The next few weeks will show of what stuff the women of India are made. I have not the shadow of a doubt as to your choice. The destiny of India is far safer in your hands than in the hands of a Government that has so exploited India's resources that she has lost faith in herself. At every one of women's meetings, I have asked for your blessings for the national effort, and I have done so in the belief that you are pure, simple and godly enough to give them with effect. You can ensure the fruitfulness of your blessings by giving up your foreign cloth and, during your spare hours, ceaselessly spinning for the nation."

## *Half-Naked Fakir*

1921

GANDHI toured extensively and wherever he went, in big cities or in far-off interior villages, thousands and thousands of people assembled to hear him. It was a tour of mass conversions to the new creed. Remarkable scenes were witnessed. In a Bihar village when Gandhi and his party were stranded in the rain, an old woman came seeking out Gandhi. "Sire, I am now one hundred and four," she said, "and my sight has grown dim. I have visited the various holy places. In my own home I have dedicated two temples. Just as we had Rama and Krishna as *avatars*, so also Mahatma Gandhi has appeared as an *avatar*, I hear. Until I have seen him, death would not appear." This simple faith moved India's millions who greeted him everywhere with the cry, "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai". Prostitutes of Barisal, the Marwari merchants of Calcutta, Oriya coolies, railway strikers, Santals eager to present khadi *chaddars*, all claimed his attention.

From Aligarh to Dibrugarh and then as far as Tinnevelly he went from village to village, from town to town, sometimes speaking in temples and mosques. Wherever he went he had to endure tyranny of love. In Barisal he put it bluntly to a crowd of 25,000: "I went to a place where everybody was busy shouting 'Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai' and every one was trying to fall at my feet but no one was willing to listen to me. I was feeling disgusted with myself and disgusted with all around me. When I hear the cries of 'Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai', every sound of the phrase pierces my heart like an arrow. If only I thought for a moment that these shouts could win swaraj for you, I could reconcile myself to my misery. But when I find that people's time and energy was spent in mere useless shouting, while at the same time real work was given the go-by, how I wish that they should instead light up a funeral pyre for me and that I might leap into it, and once for all extinguish the fire that is scorching up my heart."

During the first three months of his tour he laid emphasis on the boycott of law courts and of schools and colleges. Later these negative aspects of the campaign were rarely spoken of and he laid great stress on non-violence, Hindu-Muslim unity and the constructive programme. But even without his knowledge, the ground for courting imprisonment and "inaugurating civil disobedience" was prepared at the Karachi Khilafat Conference where historic resolutions with regard to the army and independence were passed. When Gandhi's attention was drawn to them he said: "Long before the Congress meets, if India proves true to herself, I look forward not to declaration of independence but to an honourable settlement that will satisfy the just demands of India."

In August a revolt of the Moplahs took place in Malabar, and it lasted several months. The Moplahs revolted, believing that the British rule had ceased and they were free. They established Khilafat raj complete with a king. They plundered the moneylenders and landlords, who were chiefly Hindus. In September Gandhi decided to go with Mahomed Ali to Malabar to pacify the Moplahs. On the way, at Waltair station, the Government arrested Mahomed Ali on September 14, while he was actually going to address a public meeting. Gandhi said: "In imprisoning Maulana Mahomed Ali, the Government have imprisoned the Khilafat; for, the two brothers are the truest representatives of the Khilafat. Let us imitate the courage, the faith, the fearlessness and the vigilant incessant activity of the brothers."

In a day or two came the communique issued by the Governor of Bombay stating the reasons why Maulana Mahomed Ali, his brother and five others had been arrested. They were to be prosecuted for having been responsible at the Karachi conference for a resolution tampering with the loyalty of the sepoys.

"The Governor of Bombay," Gandhi declared, "evidently does not know that the Indian National Congress began to tamper with the loyalty of the sepoy in September last year, that the central Khilafat Committee began it earlier, and I began it earlier still, for I must be permitted to take the credit or the odium of suggesting that India had a right openly to tell the sepoy and everyone who served the Government in any capacity whatsoever that he participated in the wrongs done by the Government. The conference at Karachi merely repeated Congress declaration in terms of Islam. How can anyone

having a spark of humanity in him, and any Musalman having any pride in his religion, feel otherwise than the Ali brothers have done? His Excellency's reference to the sedition of the Ali brothers is only less pardonable than his reference to the tampering. For he must know that sedition has become the creed of the Congress. Every non-co-operator is pledged to preach disaffection towards the Government established by law."

Speaking at Trichinopoly, on September 19, Gandhi declared: "I am sorry, I was not present at that historic conference at Karachi and had I been present there I should also have been one of those who supported that resolution." The Government's repressive policy helped to intensify the campaign. He had fixed September 30 for the completion of boycott of foreign cloth and the inauguration of civil disobedience, but the action of the Government offered the nation a welcome challenge a fortnight earlier. Gandhi intensified the campaign by his decision to take to a loin-cloth:

"I know that many will find it difficult to replace their foreign cloth all at once. Millions are too poor to buy enough khadi to replace their discarded cloth. Let them be satisfied with a mere loin-cloth. In our climate, we hardly need to protect our bodies during the warm months of the year. Let there be no prudery about dress. India has never insisted on full covering of the body for the males as a test of culture. In order, therefore, to set the example, I propose to discard, at least, up to the 31st of October, my *topi* and vest and to content myself with only a loin-cloth and a *chaddar*, whenever found necessary for the protection of the body. I adopt the change because I always hesitated to advise anything I may not myself be prepared to follow, also because I am anxious by leading the way to make it easy for those who cannot afford a change on discarding their foreign garments. I consider the renunciation to be also necessary for me as a sign of mourning and a bare head and bare body is such a sign in my part of the country. That we are in mourning more and more is being borne home to me, as the end of the year is approaching and we are still without swaraj. I wish to state clearly that I do not expect co-workers to renounce the use of the vest and *topi*, unless they find it necessary to do so for their own work."

Gandhi further added: "I am positive that every province and every district can, if there are enough workers, manufacture sufficient for its needs in one month. I advise complete suspension of every

activity but swadeshi. I would even withdraw pickets from liquor shops trusting the drinker to recognize the new spirit of purification. I would advise every non-co-operator to treat imprisonment as his ordinary lot in life and not think anything about it. If only we can go through the course of organizing manufacture and collecting foreign cloth during the month of October, abstaining from meetings and excitements, we shall produce an atmosphere calm and peaceful enough to embark upon civil disobedience if it is then found necessary. But I have a settled conviction that if we exhibit the strength of character, the faculty for organizing and the power of exemplary self-control, all of which are necessary for full swadeshi, we shall attain swaraj without more."

It did not take long for Gandhi to become a half-naked fakir. On September 21, at ten in the morning, a barber was called in to shave his head. The next morning he was to journey by car to Karaikudi, a distance of sixty miles from Madura. He rose very early, and proceeded to change his dress. His cap and vest he altogether discarded, and he made a little khaddar bag to carry the things he used to put in the pocket of his vest. Then he wore a piece of khaddar of a cubit width around his loins. Friends tried to dissuade him from taking to such a dress. First of all, he assured them that it was no part of his intention to turn a sanyasi. The new style of dress he was adopting, he said, was nothing to the people of South India. He resolutely took to loin-cloth. Great events seemed imminent.

On September 24 Gandhi issued an appeal to the Muslims: "We must remain non-violent, but we must not be passive. We must repeat the formula of the Ali brothers regarding the duty of soldiers and invite imprisonment. We need not think that the struggle cannot go on without even the best of us. If it cannot, we are neither fit for swaraj nor for redressing the Khilafat or the Punjab wrong."

On October 4 he convened a meeting of leaders in Bombay, to issue a manifesto, defying the Government to do their worst:

"In view of the prosecution of the Ali brothers and others for the reasons stated in the Government of Bombay communique dated 15th September, we the undersigned, speaking in our individual capacity, desire to state that it is the inherent right of every one to express his opinion without restraint about the propriety of citizens offering their services to, or remaining in the employ of the

TAMIL NAD GRAMA SEVAK ...
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Government, whether in the civil or the military department. We, the undersigned, state it as our opinion that it is contrary to national dignity for any Indian to serve as a civilian, and more especially as a soldier, under a system of government, which has brought about India's economic, moral and political degradation and which has used the soldiery and the police for repressing national aspirations, as for instance, at the time of the Rowlatt Act agitation, and which has used the soldiery for crushing the liberty of the Arabs, the Egyptians, the Turks and other nations who have done no harm to India. We are also of the opinion that it is the duty of every Indian soldier and civilian to sever his connection with the Government and find some other means of livelihood."

Some of those fifty leaders who signed the manifesto were Gandhi, Abul Kalam Azad, Ajmal Khan, Lajpat Rai, Motilal Nehru, Mrs. Naidu, Abbas Tyabji, N. C. Kelkar, V. J. Patel, Vallabhbhai Patel, M. R. Jayakar, Jawaharlal Nehru, Gangadharrao Deshpande, Umar Sobani, Jamnalal Bajaj, M. S. Aney, Dr. Ansari, Khaliquzzaman, Abdul Bari, C. Rajagopalachari, Jitendralal Banerji, Rajendra Prasad, Hasrat Mohani, Yakub Hasan, Dr. Moonje, and Jairamdas Daulatram.

On October 5 the Congress Working Committee met in Bombay and passed a resolution supporting the manifesto. The manifesto was repeated by hundreds of persons from countless platforms, but no action was taken by the Government. The bureaucracy was stunned and quite unprepared for this country-wide conflagration.

In this campaign, Tagore saw the danger of mental despotism. Gandhi had met him in Calcutta in September but the two parted agreeing to differ. Tagore had decided that he "should steer his bark against the current". In a manifesto, "A Call of Truth", published in the *Modern Review* of October 1921, Tagore wrote: "An outside influence seemed to be bearing down on the people, grinding them and making one and all speak in the same tone, follow the same groove. Everywhere I was told that culture and reasoning should abdicate, blind obedience only reign. So simple it is to crush, in the name of some outward liberty, the real freedom of the soul!" A cause as great as India's should not be dependent on the will of a single master. "The paths are intricate and hard to explore", he said. "Emotion and enthusiasm are required but also science and meditation. All the moral forces of the nation must be

called upon. Economists must find practical solution, educationists must teach, statesmen ponder, and workers work. No pressure, either open or hidden, must weigh on the intelligence." Tagore did not relish Gandhi's command, "Spin and weave". He asked: "Is this the gospel of a new creative age? If large machinery constitutes a danger for the West, will not the small machines constitute a greater danger for us?"

Tagore's noble words, some of the most beautiful ever addressed to a nation, evoked a firm reply from Gandhi. On October 13 Gandhi's stirring rejoinder appeared in *Young India*. He thanked the "Great Sentinel" for having warned India as to the pitfalls ahead, but he did not feel that Tagore's misgivings were justified:

"The bard of Santiniketan has contributed to the *Modern Review* a brilliant essay on the present movement. It is a series of word pictures which he alone can paint. It is an eloquent protest against authority, slave mentality or whatever description one gives of blind acceptance of a passing mania whether out of fear or hope. It is a welcome and wholesome reminder to all workers, that we must not be impatient, we must not impose authority, no matter how great. The poet tells us summarily to reject anything and everything that does not appeal to our reason or heart. If we would gain swaraj, we must stand for truth as we know it at any cost. A reformer who is enraged because his message is not accepted must retire to the forest to learn how to watch, wait and pray. With all this one must heartily agree, and the poet deserves the thanks of his countrymen for standing up for truth and reason. There is no doubt that our last state will be worse than our first, if we surrender our reason into somebody's keeping. And I would feel extremely sorry to discover that the country had unthinkingly and blindly followed all I had said or done. I am quite conscious of the fact that blind surrender to love is often more mischievous than a forced surrender to the lash of the tyrant. There is hope for the slave of the brute, none for that of love. Love is needed to strengthen the weak, love becomes tyrannical when it exacts obedience from an unbeliever. To mutter a mantra without knowing its value is unmanly. It is good, therefore, that the poet has invited all who are slavishly mimicking the call of the charkha boldly to declare their revolt. His essay serves as a warning to us all who in our impatience are betrayed into intolerance or even violence against those who differ from us. I regard the poet as

a sentinel warning us against the approach of enemies called bigotry, lethargy, intolerance, ignorance, inertia and the other members of that brood.

"Whilst I agree with all that the poet has said as to the necessity of watchfulness lest we cease to think, I must not be understood to endorse the proposition that there is any such blind obedience on a large scale in the country today. I have again and again appealed to reason, and let me assure him, that if happily the country has come to believe in the spinning wheel as the giver of plenty, it has done so after laborious thinking, after great hesitation. I am not sure that even now educated India has assimilated the truth underlying the charkha. He must not mistake the surface dirt for the substance underneath. Let the poet go deeper and see for himself, whether the charkha has been accepted from blind faith or from reasoned necessity.

"I do indeed ask the poet and the sage to spin the wheel as a sacrament. When there is war, the poet lays down the lyre, the lawyer his law reports, the schoolboy his books. The poet will sing the true note after the war is over, the lawyer will have occasion to go to his law books when people have time to fight among themselves. When a house is on fire, all the inmates go out, and each one takes up a bucket to quench the fire. When all about me are dying for want of food, the only occupation permissible to me is to feed the hungry. It is my conviction that India is a house on fire because its manhood is being daily scorched, it is dying of hunger because it has no work to buy food with. Khulna is starving not because the people cannot work, but because they have no work. The Ceded Districts are passing successively through a fourth famine, Orissa is a land suffering from chronic famines. Our cities are not India. India lives in her seven lakhs of villages, and the cities live upon the villages. They do not bring their wealth from other countries. The city people are brokers and commission agents for the big houses of Europe, America and Japan. The cities have co-operated with the latter in the bleeding process that has gone on for the past two hundred years. It is my belief based on experience, that India is daily growing poorer. The circulation about her feet and legs has almost stopped. And if we do not take care, she will collapse altogether.

"To a people famishing and idle, the only acceptable form in which God can dare appear is work and promise of food as wages.

God created man to work for his food, and said that those who ate without work were thieves. Eighty per cent of India are compulsorily thieves half the year. Is it any wonder if India has become one vast prison? Hunger is the argument that is driving India to the spinning wheel. The call of the spinning wheel is the noblest of all. Because it is the call of love. And love is swaraj. The spinning wheel will 'curb the mind' when the time spent on necessary physical labour can be said to do so. We must think of millions who are today less than animals, who are almost in a dying state. The spinning wheel is the reviving draught for the millions of our dying countrymen and countrywomen. 'Why should I, who have no need to work for food, spin?' may be the question asked. Because I am eating what does not belong to me. I am living on the spoliation of my countrymen. Trace the course of every pice that finds its way into your pocket, and you will realize the truth of what I write. Swaraj has no meaning for the millions, if they do not know how to employ their enforced idleness. The attainment of this swaraj is possible within a short time, and it is so possible only by the revival of the spinning wheel.

"I do want growth, I do want self-determination, I do want freedom, but I want all these for the soul. I doubt if the steel age is an advance upon the flint age. I am indifferent. It is the evolution of the soul to which the intellect and all our faculties have to be devoted. I have no difficulty in imagining the possibility of a man armoured after the modern style making some lasting and new discovery for mankind, but I have less difficulty in imagining the possibility of a man having nothing but a bit of flint and a nail for lighting his path or his matchlock ever singing new hymns of praise and delivering to an aching world a message of peace and goodwill upon earth. A plea for the wheel is a plea for recognizing the dignity of labour.

"I claim that in losing the spinning wheel we lost our left lung. We are, therefore, suffering from galloping consumption. The restoration of the wheel arrests the progress of the fell disease. There are certain things which all must do in all climes. There are certain things which all must do in certain climes. The spinning wheel is the thing which all must turn in the Indian clime for the transition stage at any rate and the vast majority must for all time.

"It was our love of foreign cloth that ousted the wheel from its position of dignity. Therefore, I consider it a sin to wear foreign

cloth. I must confess that I do not draw a sharp or any distinction between economics and ethics. Economics that hurt the moral well-being of an individual or a nation are immoral and, therefore, sinful. Thus the economics that permit one country to prey upon another are immoral. It is sinful to buy and use articles made by sweated labour. It is sinful to eat American wheat and let my neighbour the grain-dealer starve for want of custom. Similarly it is sinful for me to wear the latest finery of Regent Street, when I know that if I had but worn the things woven by the neighbouring spinners and weavers, that would have clothed me, and fed and clothed them. On the knowledge of my sin bursting upon me, I must consign the foreign garments to the flames and thus purify myself, and thenceforth rest content with the rough khadi made by my neighbours. On knowing that my neighbours may not, having given up the occupation, take kindly to the spinning wheel, I must take it up myself and thus make it popular.

"I venture to suggest to the poet, that the clothes I ask him to burn must be and are his. If they had to his knowledge belonged to the poor or the ill-clad, he would long ago have restored to the poor what was theirs. In burning my foreign clothes, I burn my shame. I must refuse to insult the naked by giving them clothes they do not need, instead of giving them work which they sorely need. I will not commit the sin of becoming their patron, but on learning that I had assisted in impoverishing them, I would give them a privileged position and give them neither crumbs nor cast-off clothing but the best of my food and clothes and associate myself with them in work.

"Nor is the scheme of non-co-operation or swadeshi an exclusive doctrine. My modesty has prevented me from declaring from the house-top that the message of non-co-operation, non-violence and swadeshi is a message to the world. It must fall flat, if it does not bear fruit in the soil where it has been delivered. At the present moment India has nothing to share with the world save her degradation, pauperism and plagues. Is it her ancient shastras that we should send to the world? Well they are printed in many editions, and an incredulous and idolatrous world refuses to look at them, because we the heirs and custodians do not live them. Before I can think of sharing with the world, I must possess. Our non-co-operation is neither with the English nor with the West. Our non-co-operation

is with the system the English have established in India, with the material civilization and its attendant greed and exploitation of the weak. Our non-co-operation is a retirement within ourselves. Our non-co-operation is a refusal to co-operate with the English administrators on their own terms. We say to them, 'Come and co-operate with us on our terms, and it will be well for us, for you and the world.' We must refuse to be lifted off our feet. A drowning man cannot save others, we must try to save ourselves. Indian nationalism is not exclusive, nor aggressive, nor destructive. It is health-giving, religious and, therefore, humanitarian. India must learn to live before she can aspire to die for humanity. The mice which helplessly find themselves between the cat's teeth acquire no merit from their enforced sacrifice.

"True to his poetical instinct the poet lives for the morrow and would have us do likewise. He presents to our admiring gaze the beautiful picture of the birds early in the morning singing hymns of praise as they soar into the sky. These birds had their day's food and soared with rested wings in whose veins new blood had flown during the previous night. But I have had the pain of watching the birds who for want of strength could not be coaxed even into a flutter of their wings. The human bird under the Indian sky gets up weaker than when he pretended to retire. For millions it is an eternal vigil or an eternal trance. It is an indescribably painful state which has to be experienced to be realized. I have found it impossible to soothe the suffering patients with a song from Kabir. The hungry millions ask for one poem—the invigorating food. They cannot be given it. They must earn it themselves. And they can earn only by the sweat of their brow."

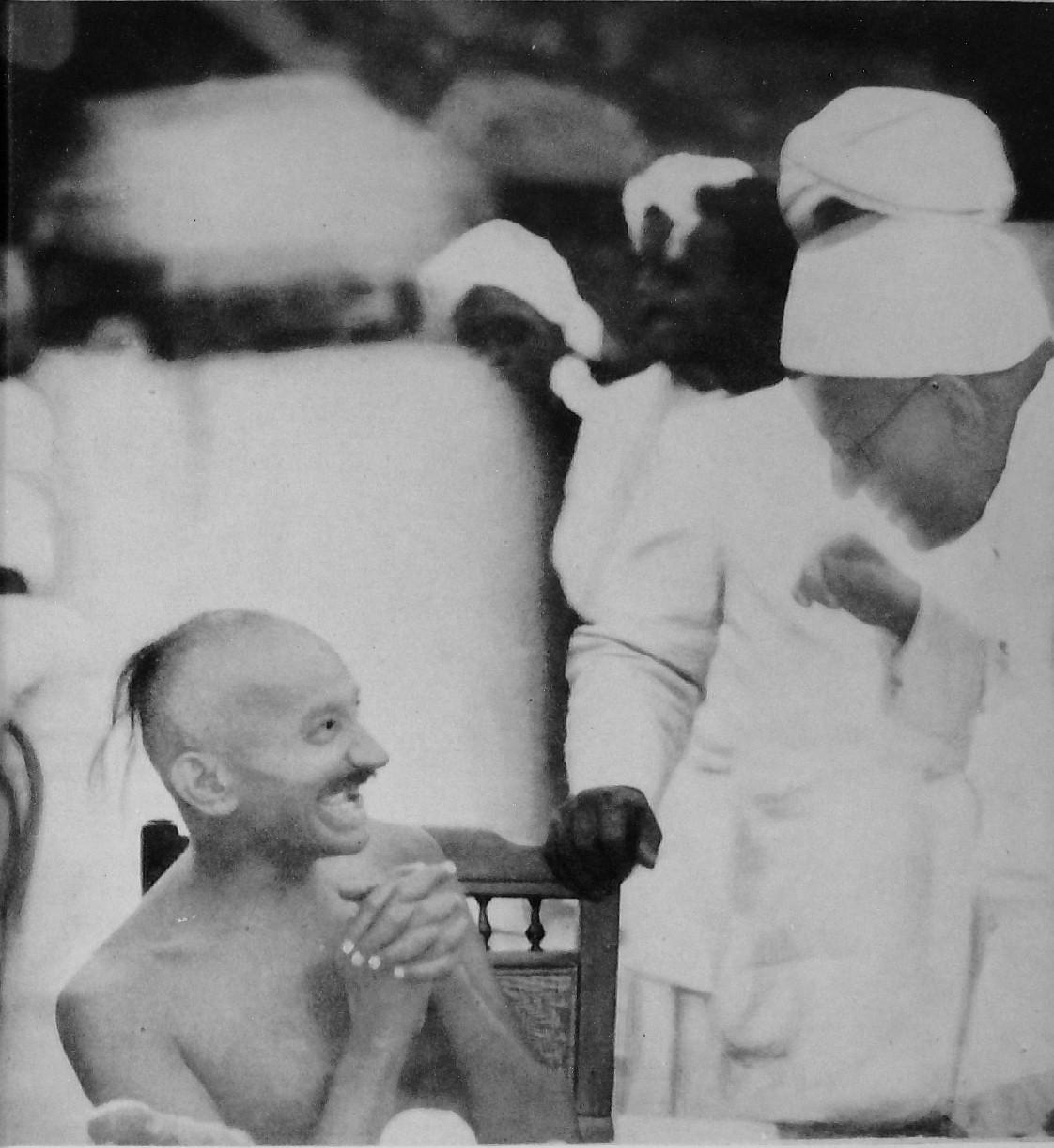
"If we will take care of today God will take care of the morrow," Gandhi dinned in the minds of the people. He defined swaraj as "abandonment of the fear of death". With the logic and moral force at his command, he tried to transform India from submissiveness to brave defiance: "When we attain swaraj, many of us will have given up the fear of death; or else we shall not have attained swaraj. Why should we be upset when children or young men or old men die? Not a moment passes when some one is not born or is not dead in this world. We should feel the stupidity of rejoicing in a birth and lamenting a death. Those who believe in the soul—and what Hindu, Musalman or Parsi is there who does not?—know that the

soul never dies. This train of thought should help us to get rid of all fear of death. And what is imprisonment to the man who is fearless of death itself? I have been led to write about this subject, because we have got to envisage even death if we have swaraj this very year. The brave meet death with a smile on their lips, but they are circumspect all the same. There is no room for foolhardiness in this non-violent war. We do not propose to go to jail or to die by an immoral act. We must mount the gallows while resisting the oppressive laws of this Government."

The arrest, trial and conviction of the Ali brothers gave the non-co-operation campaign a fillip. The trial took place at Karachi and the Ali brothers with the fellow accused were sentenced on November 1 to two years' rigorous imprisonment. To this brutal sentence the nation replied with redoubled vigour. The Bombay manifesto was ratified by the A.-I.C.C. held at Delhi on November 4. The committee authorized every province, on its own responsibility, to start civil disobedience including non-payment of taxes. The civil resisters, however, were first to swear complete obedience to the swadeshi programme, including hand-spinning, and take the vow of non-violence. They must believe in Hindu-Muslim unity and must discourage untouchability. To make the disinterested character of the movement clear, satyagrahis were told that neither they nor their families would receive any pecuniary aid from the Congress.

Such conditions were unattractive but they served as a guarantee against premature precipitation of the movement. Gandhi appealed to all to wait and see how he himself would lead the movement in Bardoli before they commenced theirs. Hasrat Mohani was of opinion that the campaign to be successful must be simultaneously started in various centres, otherwise the Government could easily concentrate their repression in one place. Gandhi stood firm and moving the resolution he said:

"I am going to start mass civil disobedience in Bardoli, one of the taluks in the district of Surat in Gujarat. The conduct of the campaign will be under my personal guidance. From the leaders of the rest of India I would ask for no further help, than that of friendly sympathy in my effort, and of active watchfulness that there be no breach of peace in their respective provinces. If peace prevails in the rest of the provinces, I have no fear but that victory is bound to crown our efforts."

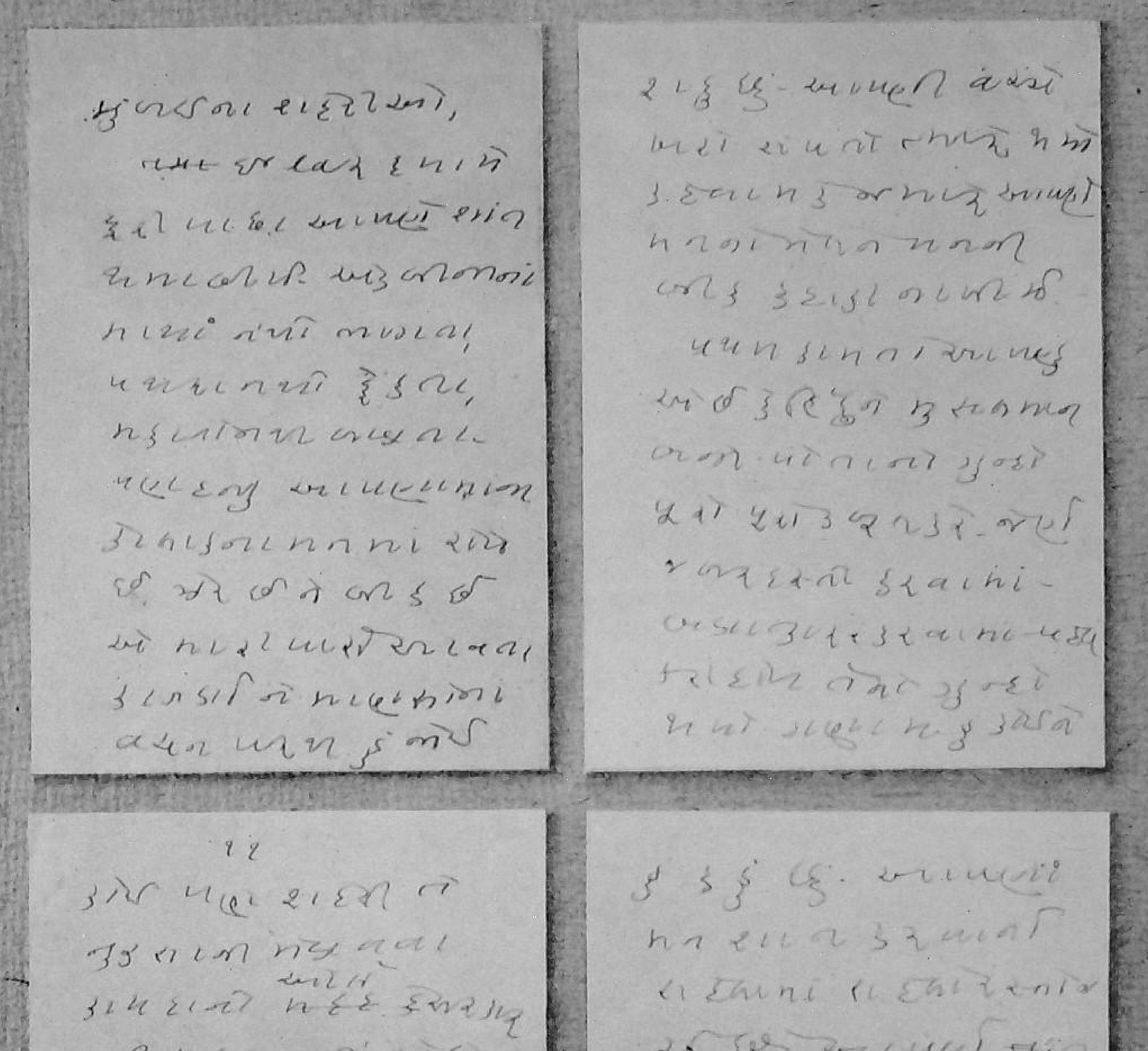


*Courtesy : R. K. Prabhu*

Gandhi at a party given by Srinivas Iyengar, Madras, September 1921

*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

An interval of rest



*Courtesy : Girdhari Kripalani*

Gandhi's manuscript of his appeal to the citizens of Bombay after the riot in November 1921

*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi the half-naked fakir

He proceeded in this vein, trying to bring home to the Congressmen the grave responsibility that was involved in the new campaign: "Mass civil disobedience is like an earthquake, a sort of a general upheaval on the political plane. Where the reign of mass civil disobedience begins, there the subsisting Government ceases to function. There, every policeman, every soldier, every Government official must either leave the place, or enlist in the service of swaraj. The police stations, the court offices, etc., all shall cease to be Government property and shall be taken charge of by the people. But for the purpose there should not be the slightest display or exercise of physical force by the people. The disobedience should be so complete that if an order was issued on us by the Government saying, 'Go to the right,' we must not hesitate to move leftward. But although the opposition to the Government must be so determined in character, the essence of civil disobedience is that it must be undertaken in a spirit of perfect composure. If the 'disobedience' was wanting in the peaceful spirit, if it was undertaken in a spirit of bravado or of insolence, or in a mood of angry excitement, resentment or retaliation, then the 'disobedience' instead of being 'civil' would become 'criminal' in essence and in fact. Therefore, not everybody is entitled to engage in a fight of civil disobedience."

In concluding the speech, Gandhi said: "When the swaraj flag floats victoriously at Bardoli, then the people of the taluk next to Bardoli, following in the steps of Bardoli, should seek to plant the flag of swaraj in their midst. Thus district by district, in regular succession, throughout the length and breadth of India, should the swaraj flag be hoisted. If, however, while the movement is on, there is the slightest outbreak of violence in any part of the country, then it would not be safe or advisable to prosecute the campaign any further. If victory has to be attained by means of civil disobedience, it is absolutely necessary that there should be only one note sounding throughout the length and breadth of the country—the note of concord and harmony among the people. If, however, in any part of the country the people concerned should break out into any form of violence, then the whole movement would lose its character as a movement of peace even as a lute would begin to emit notes of discord the moment a single string snaps."

A few days later he started for Bardoli *via* Bombay. The disobedience movement was to become effective when, on November 17,

the Prince of Wales landed at Bombay. The hartal all over the land which greeted the royal guest on his arrival was an overwhelming and successful demonstration of popular disaffection.

In Bombay the boycott was complete. The exceptions were the Europeans, some Anglo-Indians and Parsis, and a few Hindu and Muslim magnates of the city. A large number of citizens had gathered at Parel, to participate in the big bonfire of foreign cloth. Gandhi addressing the audience said that he was going to launch civil disobedience at Bardoli very soon, when probably there would be firing on the people by the military. But whatever might happen to Bardoli, his request to the people of Bombay was that they must under no circumstances allow themselves to be thrown off their balance.

While Gandhi was addressing the vast audience, the rowdy element elsewhere began to molest peaceful citizens and hold up traffic. As the day advanced, the fury of the mob, now intoxicated with success, rose high. Gandhi was appraised that a serious outbreak was in progress, and that disorderly scenes were being enacted in different parts of the city. He immediately went out to stop further rioting. The Parsis as a community having joined in the demonstration of welcome to the prince, in defiance of the wishes of the general body of people, had been the target of attack. When they were returning home from the reception ceremony, the foreign caps and foreign garments on their persons were seized and consigned to flames. Many liquor shops had been smashed and some tram-cars had been burnt. A police station and another building had been set on fire. Four policemen had been beaten to death and some sustained injuries. Gandhi arrived and witnessed the scene. A huge crowd had gathered and there was a terrible noise and confusion all around. When they saw Gandhi in their midst, they gave themselves up to frenzied demonstrations and began to shout "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai". He reproved them and ordered them off. Sprinkling water on the faces of the injured policemen he remained there for some time nursing them. After having made arrangements for their removal to the hospital he left.

From every part of the city reports of frightful excesses, of murder, of rioting continued to pour in till ten in the night. Gandhi had been an eyewitness to such dreadful scenes, and the agony which he suffered was unbearable. Thrown into a state of despondency, he kept awake till one in the morning. Weighed down by grief and

remorse, he went on recalling the high hopes with which he had been directing the movement. But those hopes had now vanished into thin air. The spirit of intolerance had gone on increasing unchecked. Why he had not had from the very first the sagacity to stand up against every such exhibition of intolerance and violence? Such was the charge he went on repeating against himself in tones of bitter despair and self-reproach.

Gandhi had come to believe that there were some directing brains behind this outbreak of mob violence. The incident had made the deepest impression on him. If at Bombay, mob violence was being engineered and directed by the skilled hands from behind, then the launching of civil disobedience at Bardoli must remain a chimera. He thought: "The Lord has saved me from a dire calamity. I was most unwilling to come to Bombay; but God wanted me to see the sights I have seen, and dragged me to Bombay. If today I had stayed at Ahmedabad, I might have easily belittled the happenings in Bombay and paid little heed to them. But the terrible scenes that I have seen enacted before my own eyes could not possibly be put aside, and who knows what further disasters would await us if at this moment civil disobedience should be resorted to at Bardoli."

That very night he cancelled his programme of visiting Surat and Bardoli and sent his son Devadas to Surat to see to it that all preparations for civil disobedience be suspended.

The next morning, November 18, the Parsis, the Anglo-Indians and the Jewish residents were adequately armed and frantic with rage were thirsting for revenge. Meanwhile the Congressmen went round the city, trying to pacify the people. But the situation was hopeless. Reprisals led to reprisals and there was no knowing how things would end.

Gandhi felt as if all his strength had vanished: "Why was I unable permanently to influence the crowd? Where was the power of ahimsa in me? What was I to do? I could not, I would not ask the aggrieved people to seek Government aid. We had no panchayats to deal out justice. There was no one I could approach who could bring about peace." What relief could he give to the sufferers from mob violence? He was not afraid of sacrificing himself. But what use? "If I allowed myself to be torn to pieces by justly incensed Parsis or Christians, I would only give rise to greater bloodshed. Whilst as a soldier I must avoid no unavoidable risk, I must not recklessly run the risk of being

killed. Then what was I to do?" At last came the idea of a fast to his rescue: "If I may not give myself to be killed through human agency, I must give myself to God to be taken away by refusing to eat till He heard my prayer. For me, a bankrupt, that was the only thing left. I could not draw upon the people from their innocence. They dishonoured the cheque I presented personally on the 17th. I must now somehow or other recoup lost credit or die in the attempt. I must draw upon God for further credit to enable me to transact His business. I could only do so by humbling myself, crawling in the dust before Him, denying myself the food He has given. I must in a thousand ways show Him that I am in earnest, and if I am not found worthy to conduct His business, ask Him to recall me and refashion me according to my worth and His will."

Gandhi declared his resolve to fast on November 19: "It is not possible to describe to you the agony I have suffered during the past two days. I am writing this at 3.30 a.m. in perfect peace. After two hours' prayer and meditation I have found it. I must refuse to eat or drink anything but water till Hindus and Musalmans of Bombay have made peace with the Parsis, the Christians and the Jews, and till the non-co-operators have made peace with the co-operators.

"The swaraj that I have witnessed during the last two days has stunk in my nostrils. Hindu-Muslim unity has been a menace to the handful of Parsis, Christians and Jews. The non-violence of the non-co-operators has been worse than the violence of co-operators. For, with non-violence on our lips, we have terrorized those who have differed from us, and in so doing we have denied our God. There is only one God for us all, whether we find Him through the Koran, the Zend-Avesta, the Talmud, or the Gita. And He is God of Truth and Love. I have no interest in living, save for proving this faith in me. I cannot hate an Englishman or any one else. I have spoken and written against his institutions, especially the one he has set up in India. I shall continue to do so if I live. But you must not mistake my condemnation of the system for that of the man. My religion requires me to love him as I love myself. I would deny God if I did not attempt to prove it at this critical moment.

"And the Parsis? I have meant every word I have said about them. Hindus and Musalmans will be unworthy of freedom if they do not defend them and their honour with their lives. Unless Hindus and Musalmans have expressed full and free repentance, I cannot face

again the appealing eyes of Parsi men and women that I saw on the 17th instant as I passed through them. Nor can I face Andrews when he returns from East Africa, if we have done no reparation to the Indian Christians whom we are bound to protect as our own brothers and sisters. We may not think of what they or the Parsis in self-defence or by way of reprisals have done to some of us.

"You can see quite clearly that I must do the utmost reparation to this handful of men and women who have been the victims of forces that have come into being largely through my instrumentality. I invite every Hindu and Musalman to do likewise. But I do not want any one to fast. Fasting is only good when it comes in answer to prayer and as a felt yearning of the soul. I invite every Hindu and Musalman citizen to retire to his home, ask God for forgiveness, and to befriend the injured communities from the very depth of his heart.

"I invite my fellow workers not to waste a single word of sympathy for me. I need or deserve none. But I invite them to make a ceaseless effort to regain control over the turbulent elements. This is a terribly true struggle. There is no room for sham or humbug in it. Before we can make any further progress with our struggle, we must cleanse our hearts.

"One special word to my Musalman brothers. I have approached the Khilafat as a sacred cause. I have striven for Hindu-Muslim unity, because India cannot live free without it, and because we would both deny God, if we considered one another as natural enemies. I have thrown myself into the arms of the Ali brothers, because I believe them to be true and god-fearing men. The Musalmans have to my knowledge played the leàding part during the two days of carnage. It has deeply hurt me. I ask every Musalman worker to rise to his full height, to realize his duty to his faith and see that the carnage stops."

On November 19 he called back his son Devadas to Bombay and he gave out that Devadas had been brought back on purpose. He was to be sent out as a "sacrifice" for slaughter by the rioters, should a fresh outbreak occur in neighbouring district. The fast was on but Gandhi had not a moment's rest. All the time he was surrounded by workers who had come to consult him as to how to put an end to the rioting. He would say: "I am feeling all the better for fasting. I have been enjoying a spell of unbroken peace

within." The offshoot of this fast was his vow "to observe every Monday a twenty-four hours' fast till swaraj is attained."

Quiet was soon restored and on November 22 Gandhi broke his penetential fast in the midst of co-operators, non-co-operators, Hindus, Muslims and Parsis.

A meeting of the Working Committee was held in Bombay on November 23. The Bardoli campaign was postponed. The Working Committee asked the Congress committees to organize volunteers' corps, every member of which had to take the pledge of non-violence "in word and in deed" and inculcate the spirit of non-violence also amongst others.

The European residents urged the Viceroy to act, and a series of strong measures were enforced all over India. Many and various were the forms employed to secure quiet atmosphere during the visit of the Prince of Wales. On November 19 the Bengal Government declared all volunteer organizations under the Congress and Khilafat as unlawful bodies and ordered suppression of political meetings. The Governments of the Punjab, the United Provinces, Bihar and Assam followed suit. The challenge was taken up everywhere by open defiance of the notification. The U. P. had the unique distinction of having fifty-five members of its provincial committee taken in one sweep by the police while engaged in discussing a resolution on volunteers at an emergency meeting in Allahabad. C. R. Das, the President elect of the Congress, was arrested on December 10. There were country-wide arrests of prominent leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai, Motilal Nehru, Azad and Jawaharlal Nehru.

Arrests of volunteers were made by the thousand, which resulted in bringing thousands of new recruits to register as volunteers. The tide turned and the movement rapidly gathered strength in spite of the temporary check it had received in Bombay. Hartal followed the Prince of Wales wherever he went.

The Government replied non-violence by naked force. "Gandhi caps" and khaddar dress were anathema to the officials, and marked out the wearer for all kinds of insults and humiliation and for false prosecution. Assaults on volunteers, stripping them of their clothing and ducking them in village tanks were some of the practical jokes designed by the police for their own amusement. Destruction of Congress and Khilafat offices and records of national educational institutions, burning of houses and crops and looting of property

were resorted to in the case of obstinate recalcitrants. Several cases of forcible removal of jewellery from women and of assaults and outrages on them were in evidence.

Pandit Malaviya was moved by the cruel repression and began negotiations with the Viceroy. Lord Reading wanted to make the prince's visit to Calcutta a success and encouraged Malaviya to negotiate peace with Gandhi. In a telegram dated December 19 Gandhi wrote to Malaviya: Do not worry repression. Conference will be abortive unless Government penitent and anxious. Settle three things—Punjab, Khilafat, Swaraj."

Malaviya saw Das and Azad in the Presidency jail, Calcutta, on December 17. He thought that if they could be persuaded to accept a proposal agreed upon by the Viceroy, Gandhi would come round. On December 18 Das and Azad recommended calling off of hartal on certain conditions. Gandhi wired back: "Your wire. Composition, date of conference should be previously determined. Release should include all prisoners convicted for *fatwas* including Karachi ones. Subject to these conditions in addition yours we can in my opinion waive hartal." When Malaviya saw Lord Reading with the telegram, he got annoyed. The negotiations continued but Gandhi saw through the game of Lord Reading. On December 20 he sent a wire to Malaviya: "Regret exceedingly inability give undertaking asked. Non-co-operation can cease only after satisfactory result conference. In no case have I authority decide for Congress." The negotiations failed.

The revolution seemed to be smouldering everywhere, ready to burst into flame, when the Congress met at Ahmedabad during the last week of December. It met under very exciting circumstances under the guidance of Gandhi, the one leader whose arrest was a step the Government dared not take. Das, the president elect, being in jail, Ajmal Khan was appointed as the acting president.

The Congress camp of half a mile length was constructed of khadi and named Khadi Nagar. The reception committee used only khadi manufactured in Gujarat and worth rupees three lakhs and a half. Chairs and benches were dispensed with. There was accommodation for only one lakh visitors but the figure reached two lakhs. Khadi Nagar, the adjoining Muslim Nagar, and the Khilafat pandal next to it were a triumphant demonstration of Hindu-Muslim unity and an ocular demonstration of the hold that khadi had on the

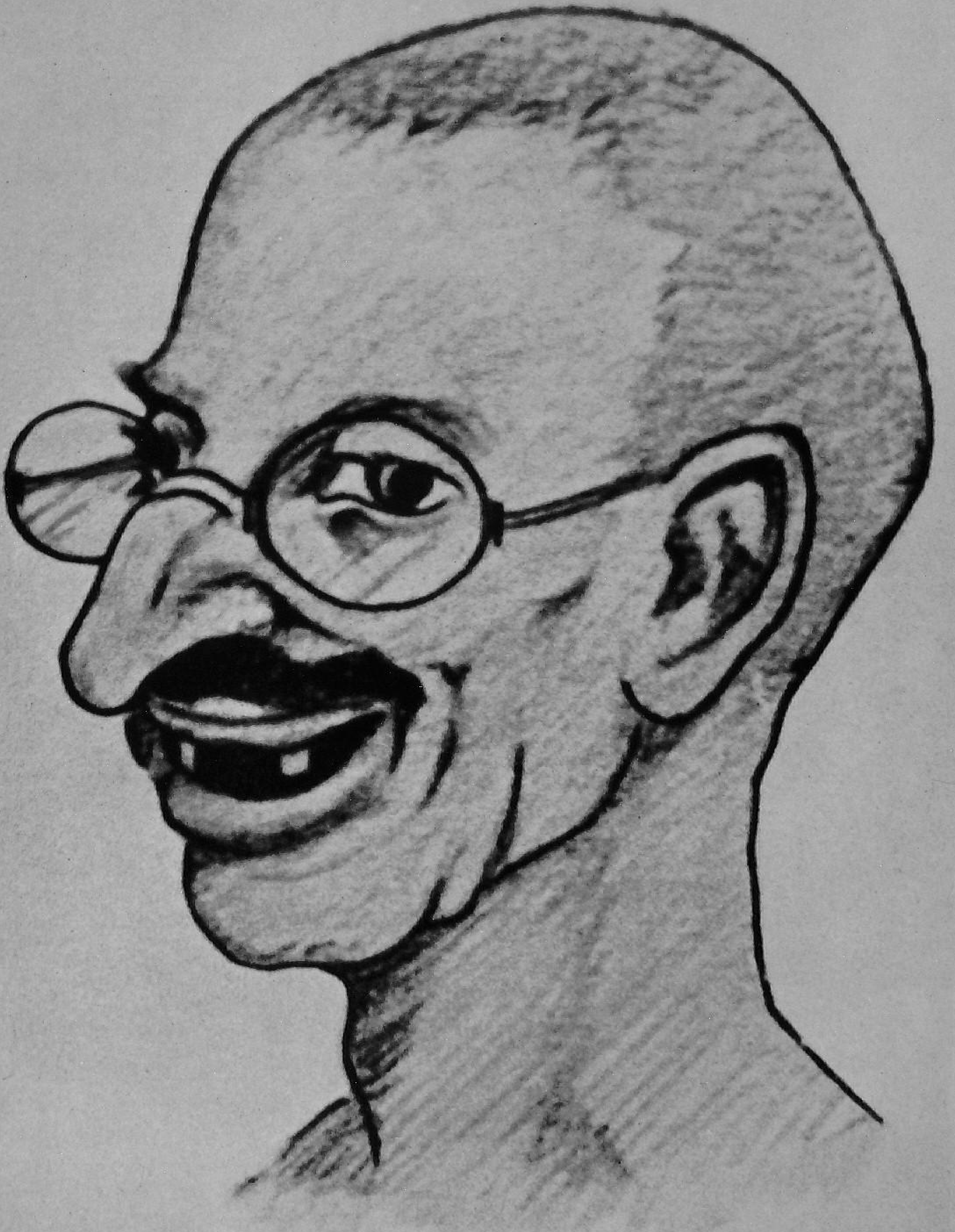
people. Nearly two thousand khadi-clad volunteers looked after the arrangements of the session.

The Congress was the centre of attraction for full eight days to thousands of admiring spectators. The exhibition ground was quite near, which was visited by no less than forty thousand visitors daily. The paintings from Santiniketan and the beautiful carvings were there to instruct people in art. The concerts in which musicians from all parts of India took part were an irresistible attraction. All the processes of khadi production were prominently exhibited.

Vallabhbhai Patel, chairman of the reception committee, took only fifteen minutes to read his address in Hindi. The president's address took no more than twenty minutes. Every speech was to the point and not a minute was allowed to be wasted in idle talk. The new constitution had worked for a year and it had proved a great success. There was an atmosphere of earnestness and efficiency about the Subjects Committee which had ample time for deliberation. It was a committee not chosen haphazard but deliberately by electors who knew what they were doing. The delegates insisted upon their doubts being solved before they voted.

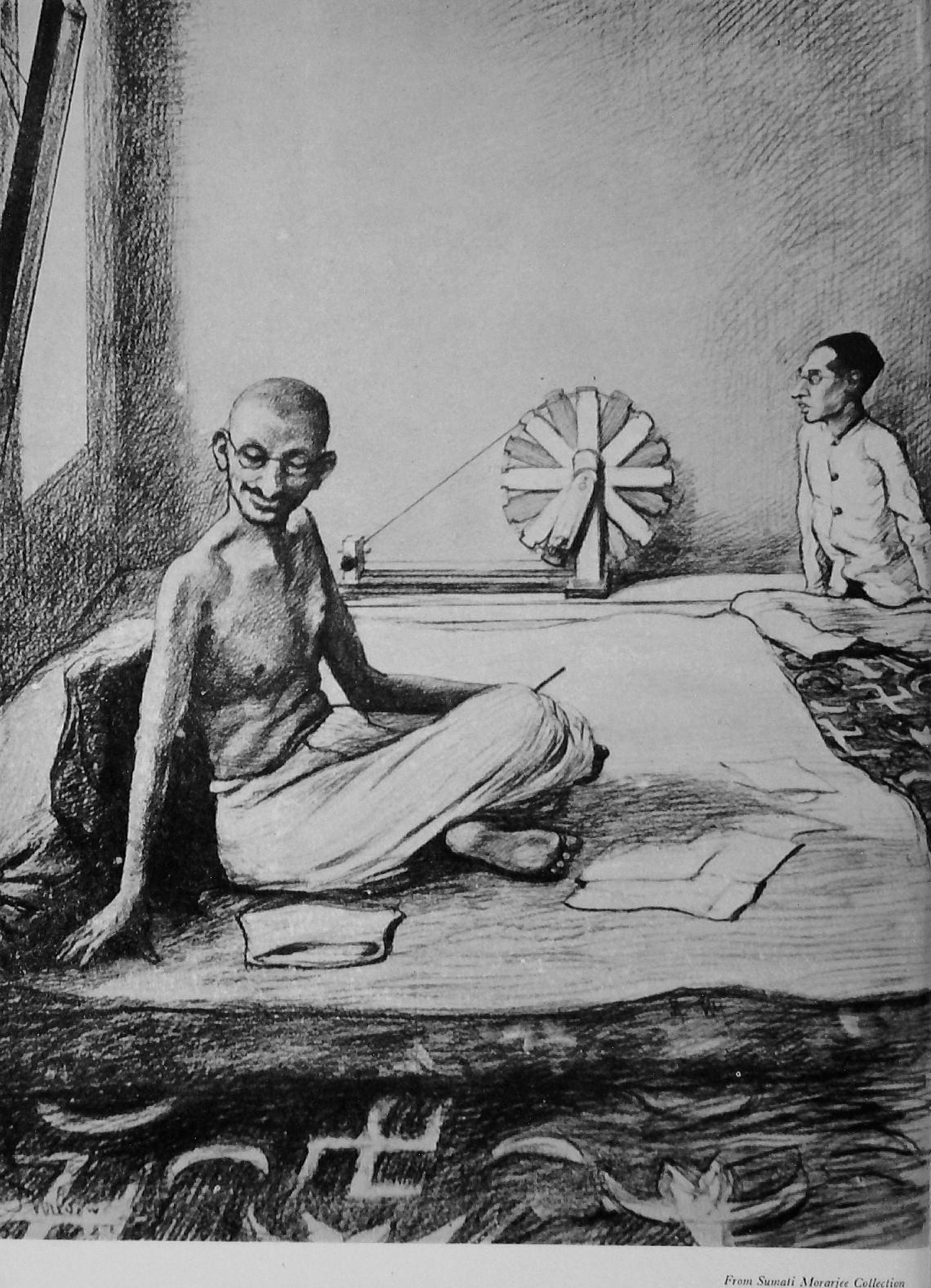
At Ahmedabad there were two schools of thought trying to influence the Congress policy. Malaviya wanted the Congress to pass a resolution calling for a round table conference. This was defeated by an overwhelming majority. Referring to a peace proposal, Gandhi said: "I am a man of peace but I do not want peace that you find in the grave." The impatient element in the Congress showed indignation at the arrests of thousands of workers and Maulana Hasrat Mohani wanted the Congress to change its creed and methods. The maulana put up a plucky fight for independence on the Congress platform and then as president of the Muslim League, but he was each time defeated. He wanted to sever all connection with the British even as partners and equals and even though the Khilafat question be satisfactorily solved. In reply Gandhi said:

"Think fifty times before you take a step which may redound not to your credit, not to your advantage, but which may cause irreparable injury. Let us first of all gather up our strength. Let us first of all sound our own depth. Let us not go into waters whose depth we do not know. Our creeds are not such simple things like clothes which a man changes at will and puts on at will. They are creeds for which people die, for which people live for ages and ages. Our creed is an



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi's caricature in the *Illustrated London News*, December 1921



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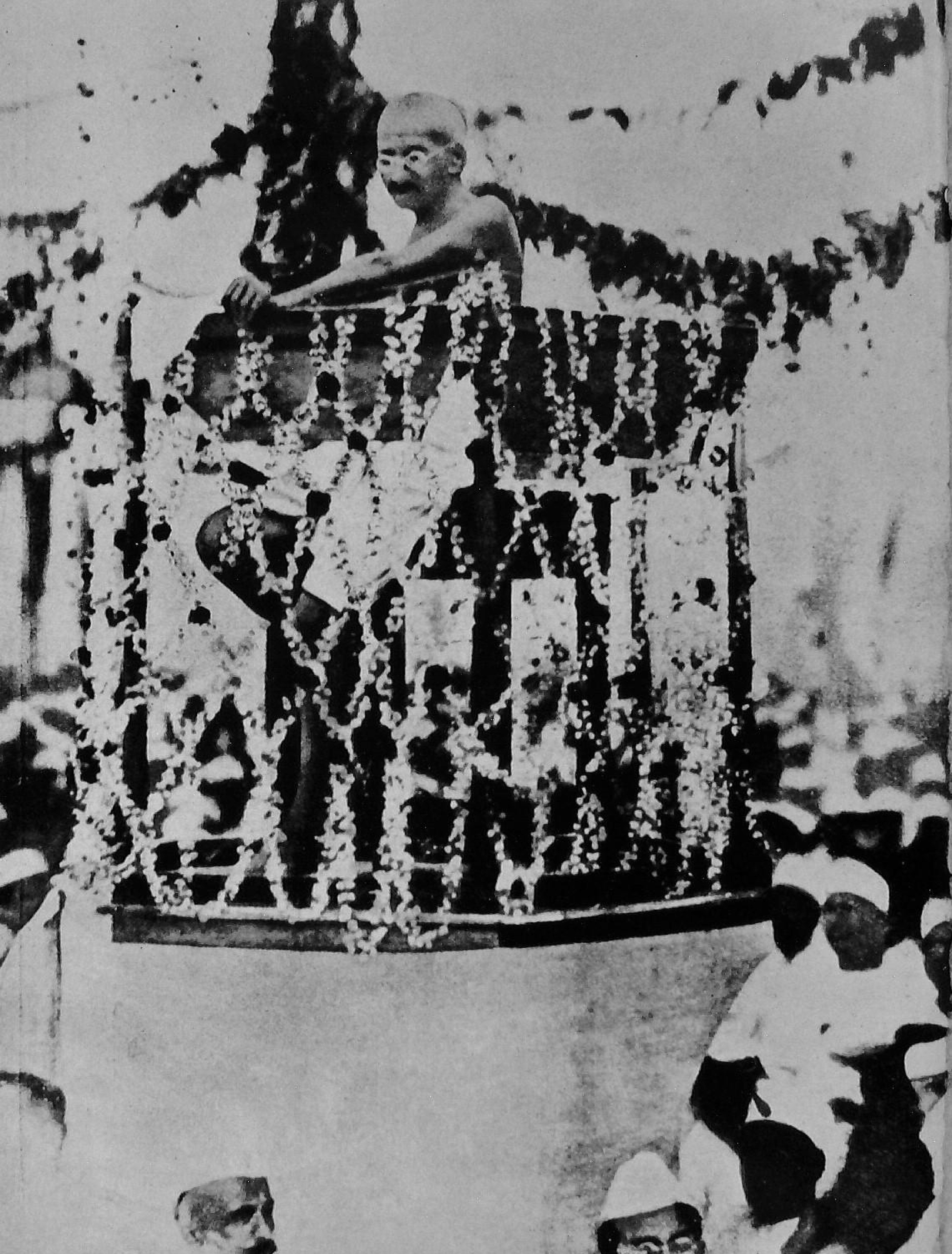
"The De Valera of India: A prophet of the spinning wheel"—*Illustrated London News*, 1921

*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi with Vallabhbhai Patel and Mrs. Naidu at the flag salutation ceremony during the Ahmedabad session of the Congress, December 1921

The Ahmedabad Congress of 1921 in session



*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi moving the main resolution at the Ahmedabad Congress, 1921

extensive creed. It takes in the weakest and the strongest. The limited creed of Maulana Hasrat Mohani does not admit the weakest of your brothers. Therefore, I ask you in all confidence to reject this proposition."

Gandhi tried to hit the golden mean in the non-co-operation resolution. Six thousand delegates adopted Gandhi's resolution calling for "aggressive civil disobedience to all Government laws and constitutions, for non-violence, for the continuance of public meetings throughout India despite the Government prohibition, and for all Indians to offer themselves peacefully for arrest by joining the volunteer corps."

In an appeal to the Government, "in all humility", he wrote: "No matter what you do, no matter how you repress us, we shall one day wring reluctant repentance from you; and we ask you think betimes, and take care what you are doing, and see that you do not make the three hundred millions of India your eternal enemies."

Realizing that many of the members would be arrested at the close of the session, the Congress made Gandhi its "executive authority" with a condition that he should agree to no change in the national creed nor make peace with the Government without the consent of the Congress.

At the Ahmedabad Congress the public support was sought for hand-spinning and hand-weaving, communal unity, prohibition and eradication of untouchability. The charkha found a place in the Congress programme. Gandhi appeared in his loin-cloth on the Congress platform and pleaded for the "wheel of fortune".

Under "Introspection", Gandhi wrote in *Young India*:

"Correspondents have written to me in pathetic language asking me not to commit suicide in January, should swaraj be not attained by then, and should I find myself outside the prison walls. I find that language but inadequately expresses one's thought, especially when the thought itself is confused or incomplete. My writing in the *Navajivan* was, I fancied, clear enough. But I observe that its translation has been misunderstood. The original too has not escaped the tragedy that has overtaken the translation.

"One great reason for the misunderstanding lies in my being considered almost a perfect man. Friends who know my partiality for the Gita have thrown relevant verses at me, and shown how my threat to commit suicide contradicts the teachings which I am

attempting to live. All these mentors of mine forget that I am but a seeker after Truth. I claim to have found the way to it. I claim to be making a ceaseless effort to find it. But I admit that I have not yet found it. To find Truth completely is to realize oneself and one's destiny, that is, to become perfect. I am painfully conscious of my imperfections, and therein lies all the strength I possess, because it is a rare thing for a man to know his own limitations.

"If I was a perfect man, I own I should not feel the miseries of my neighbours as I do. As a perfect man, I should take note of them, prescribe a remedy and compel adoption by the force of unchallengeable truth in me. But as yet, I only see as through a glass darkly and, therefore, have to carry conviction by slow and laborious processes, and then too, not always with success. That being so, I would be less than human if, with all my knowledge of avoidable misery pervading the land and of the sight of mere skeletons under the very shadow of the Lord of the Universe, I did not feel with and for all the suffering but dumb millions of India. The hope of a steady decline in that misery sustains me; but suppose that, with all my sensitiveness to sufferings, to pleasure and pain, cold and heat, and with all my endeavour to carry the healing message of the spinning wheel to the heart, I have reached only the ear and never pierced the heart, suppose further, that at the end of the year I find the people are as sceptical as they are today about the present possibility of attainment of swaraj by means of the peaceful revolution of the wheel. Suppose further, that I find that the excitement during the past twelve months has been only an excitement and a stimulation but no settled belief in the programme, and lastly, suppose that the message of peace has not penetrated the hearts of Englishmen, should I not doubt my *tapasya* and feel my unworthiness for leading the struggle? As a true man, what should I do? Should I not kneel down before my Maker, and ask Him to take away this useless body and make me a fitter instrument of service?

"Swaraj does consist in the change of Government and its real control by the people, but that would be merely the form. The substance that I am hankering after is a definite acceptance of the means and a real change of heart on the part of the people. I am certain that it does not require ages for Hindus to discard the error of untouchability, for Hindus and Muslims to shed enmity and accept heart friendship as an eternal factor of national life, for all

to adopt the charkha as the only universal means of attaining India's economic salvation and for all to believe that India's freedom lies through non-violence, and no other method. Definite, intelligent and free adoption by the nation of this programme, I hold, as the attainment of the substance. The symbol, the transfer of power, is sure to follow, even as the seed truly laid must develop into a tree.

"The reader will thus perceive that, what I accidentally stated to the friends for the first time in Poona and then repeated to others, was but a confession of my imperfections and an expression of my feelings and unworthiness for the great cause which, for the time being, I seem to be leading. I have enunciated no doctrine of despair. On the contrary, I have felt so sanguine at the time of writing that we will gain the substance during this year. I have stated at the same time as a practical idealist that I should no more feel worthy to lead a cause which I might feel myself diffident of handling. The labouring without attachment means as much a relentless pursuit of truth as a retracing after discovery of error and a renunciation of leadership without a pang after discovery of unworthiness. I have but shadowed forth my intense longing to lose myself in the Eternal and become merely a lump of clay in the Potter's divine hands, so that my services may become more certain, because uninterrupted by the baser self in me."

According to the critics, the end of the year which should have brought swaraj passed without any tangible result. In the biting words of Mrs. Besant: "Swaraj was to arrive on September 30 or October 1, 1921; on October 31; on December 31, at the Congress; it is as far off as ever."

In reply to the charge, Gandhi observed:

"I am unable to accept any blame for having set the time-limit. I would have been wrong not to do so, knowing as I did that if the people fulfilled the conditions which were capable of easy fulfilment, swaraj was certainly inside of twelve months. The time-limit was not fixed in order to rouse the teeming millions, but it was fixed in order to rivet the attention of Congressmen and Congresswomen on their sense of immediate duty and on the grand consequence of its fulfilment. Without the time-limit we would not have collected the crore nor would we have introduced so many charkhas, nor manufactured thousands of rupees worth of khadi and distributed lakh amongst the poorest workers in the country. It is not a sign

of bad soldiery to find Bengal, the United Provinces and the Punjab supplying prisoners as fast as Government can take them. And when the word is passed round the other provinces for repression of a violent type, I doubt not that they will shine as brilliantly as the three fortunate ones I have mentioned."

The British were determined to crush the movement, the people of India were determined to suffer the worst oppression. There was an orgy of arrests at the end of the year. Thirty-thousand men were imprisoned. And at the back of them, thousands of others stood ready to give themselves up to prove their faith in the cause of freedom.

Swaraj did not dawn but the mind in chains was set free.

## *Chauri Chaura*

1922

GANDHI was now the generalissimo of the Congress. The top leaders were behind the bars. With great pride *Young India*, week after week, published the names of those who courted imprisonment. "His Majesty's hotel" was not a pleasant place to live in. "Starvation, or its alternative canine food, no covering much less any worth the name to protect against the severe winter, microbe-infected, lice-laden, blood-stained tatters, the worn-off relics of common felons," was the lot of the patriots. Mahadev Desai was tempted to write to Gandhi on the jail horrors while being transferred from one jail to another. Gandhi introducing the letter said: "I hate any breach of discipline but in this instance I have no choice. Duty compels me to publish, as it has compelled Mahadev Desai to post the letter. I do not mind Mahadev Desai being rewarded with flogging for the indiscipline which is certainly more mischievous than the refusal to wear lousy clothes." Without any provocation the political prisoners were insulted, flogged and given hard labour.

The pages of *Young India* were full of the story of repression. Gandhi observed: "Jallianwala Bagh though atrocious was the cleanest demonstration of Government intentions and it gave us the needed shock. What is now going on is being done inside the cold prison walls or in little unknown villages and, therefore, has no theatrical value. Our duty, therefore, clearly is to invite martial law and 'no damned nonsense' and evolve the courage to draw the rifle fire not in our backs as in 1919, but in our open and willing breasts and without resentment."

The spirit of the time was mirrored in a statement made by Jawaharlal before a magistrate, in 1922: "Affection and loyalty are of the heart. They cannot be purchased in the market-place, much less can they be extorted at the point of the bayonet. We are fighting for freedom of our country and faith. I shall go to jail again most

willingly and joyfully. Jail has indeed become a heaven for us, a holy place of pilgrimage. I marvel at my good fortune. To serve India in the battle of freedom is honour enough. To serve her under a leader like Mahatma Gandhi is doubly fortunate. But to suffer for the dear country! What greater fortune could befall an Indian, unless it is death for the cause or the full realization of our glorious dream?"

The people impatiently waited for directions. In *Young India* of January 5, 1922 Gandhi wrote on the "Immediate Issue": "Swaraj, Khilafat and the Punjab occupy a subordinate place to the issue sprung upon the country by the Government. We must first make good the right of free speech and free association before we can make any progress towards our goal. The Government would kill us if they could by a flank attack. To accept defeat in the matter of free speech and free association is to court disaster. If the Government is allowed to destroy non-violent activities in the country, however dangerous they may be to its existence, even the Liberals' work must come to a standstill. In the general interest, therefore, we must defend these elementary rights with our lives. We cannot be coerced into disbanding volunteer associations or giving up other activities which we may deem desirable for our growth.

"The safest and the quickest way to defend these rights is to ignore the restriction. We must speak the truth under shower of bullets. We must band together in the face of bayonets. No cost is too great for purchasing these fundamental rights. And on this there can be no compromise, no parleying, no conference. Withdrawal of notifications of disbandment and prohibition orders and discharge of all who are imprisoned for non-violent activities must precede any conference or settlement. We must be content to die, if we cannot live as free men and women.

"I wish I could persuade everybody that civil disobedience is never followed by anarchy. Criminal disobedience can lead to it. Every state puts down criminal disobedience by force. It perishes, if it does not. But to put down civil disobedience is to attempt to imprison conscience. Civil disobedience can only lead to strength and purity. A civil resister never uses arms and hence he is harmless to a state that is at all willing to listen to the voice of public opinion. He is dangerous for an autocratic state, for he brings about its fall by engaging public opinion upon the matter for which he resists the state. Civil disobedience, therefore, becomes a sacred duty when

the state has become lawless, or which is the same thing, corrupt. And a citizen that barters with such a state shares its corruption of lawlessness.

"It is, therefore, possible to question the wisdom of applying civil disobedience in respect of a particular act or law; it is possible to advise delay and caution. But the right itself cannot be allowed to be questioned. It is a birthright that cannot be surrendered without surrender of one's self-respect.

"At the same time that the right of civil disobedience is insisted upon, its use must be guarded by all conceivable restrictions. Every possible provision should be made against an outbreak of violence or general lawlessness. Its area as well as its scope should also be limited to the barest necessity of the case. In the present case, therefore, aggressive civil disobedience should be confined to a vindication of the right of free speech and free association. In other words non-co-operation, so long as it remains non-violent must be allowed to continue without let or hindrance. When that position is attained it is time for a representative conference to be summoned for the settlement of Khilafat, the Punjab and swaraj, but not till then."

In the next issue of *Young India*, he wrote an article entitled "Liberty of the Press":

"One by one, the pretensions of the Government that the reforms represent more liberty and more concession to popular feeling are dropping out under the stress of circumstances. The pretensions can be justified only if they can stand the test under a severe strain. Liberty of speech means that it is unassailed even when the speech hurts; liberty of the press can be said to be truly respected only when the press can comment in the severest terms upon and even misrepresent matters; protection against misrepresentation or violence being secured not by an administrative gagging order, not by closing down the press but by punishing the real offender, leaving the press itself unrestricted. Freedom of association is truly respected when assemblies of people can discuss even revolutionary projects, the state relying upon the force of public opinion and the civil police, not the savage military at its disposal, to crush any actual outbreak of revolution that is designed to confound public opinion and the state representing it.

"The Government of India is now seeking to crush the three powerful vehicles of expressing and cultivating public opinion and is thus

once more, but happily for the last time, proving its arbitrary and despotic character. The fight for swaraj, Khilafat, and the Punjab means a fight for this threefold freedom before all else.

"The *Independent* is no longer a printed sheet. The *Democrat* is no more. And now the sword has descended upon the *Pratap* and the *Kesari* of Lahore. The *Bande Mataram*, Lalaji's child, has warded off the blow by depositing Rs. 2,000 security. The other two have had their first security forfeited and are now given ten days' notice to deposit Rs. 10,000 each or close down. I hope that the security of Rs. 10,000 will be refused.

"I presume that what is happening in the United Provinces and the Punjab will happen in the others, unless the infection is prevented from spreading by some action on the part of the public.

"In the first place I would urge the editors of these papers to copy the method of the *Independent* and publish their views in writing. I believe that an editor who has anything worth saying and who commands a clientele cannot be easily hushed so long as his body is left free. He has delivered his finished message as soon as he is put under duress. The Lokamanya spoke more eloquently from the Mandalay fortress than through the columns of the printed *Kesari*. His influence was multiplied a thousandfold by his incarceration, his speech and his pen had acquired much greater power after he was discharged than before his imprisonment. By his death he is editing his paper without pen and speech through the sacred resolution of the people to realize his life's dream. He could not have done more if he were today in the flesh preaching his mantra. Critics like me would perhaps be still finding fault with this expression of his or that. Today all criticism is hushed, his mantra alone rules millions of hearts which are determined to raise a permanent living memorial by the fulfilment of his mantra in their lives.

"Therefore, let us first break the idol of machinery and leaden type. The pen is our foundry and the hands of willing copyists our printing-machine. Idolatry is permissible in Hinduism when it subserves an ideal. It becomes a fetish when the idol itself becomes the ideal. Let us use the machine and the type whilst we can, to give unfettered expression to our thoughts. But let us not feel helpless when they are taken away from us by a 'paternal' Government watching and controlling every combination of types and every movement of the printing-machine.

"The handwritten newspaper is, I admit, a heroic remedy meant for heroic times. By being indifferent to the aid of the printing-room and the compositor's stick we ensure their free retention or restoration for all time.

"We must do something more. We must apply civil disobedience for the restoration of that right before we think of what we call larger things. The restoration of free speech, free association and free press is almost the whole swaraj."

Some Liberals showed anxiety to bring about an understanding between the Congress and Government. On January 14 Malaviya and Jinnah convened an All-Parties' Conference in Bombay to discuss the terms on which the truce could be asked for. The conference was attended by about three hundred delegates belonging to all parties. Sir C. Sankaran Nair was appointed a chairman. Non-cooperators were present as invited guests and not as members of the conference. At the suggestion of N. C. Kelkar, Gandhi became the sole spokesman on behalf of the Congress.

Malaviya and Jinnah were ready with the draft proposals, which did not contain any clause about the release of the Ali brothers and other *fatwa* prisoners. But Gandhi insisted on the release clause as one of the main terms. At this Sankaran Nair got enraged and left the meeting in a huff. Sir M. Visvesvaraya was then appointed chairman of the conference.

The conference passed a resolution making the release of the Ali brothers and other Khilafat prisoners a condition precedent to the holding of a round table conference. It condemned the repressive policy of the Government and appealed to the Congress to postpone the contemplated campaign of civil disobedience pending negotiations with the Government. It suggested an early convening of a round table conference with authority to make a settlement on the questions of Khilafat, the Punjab and swaraj.

At the request of the conference, the Working Committee of the Congress which was held in Bombay on January 17 postponed the starting of any campaign for a while: "The Working Committee resolves that the offensive civil disobedience contemplated by the Ahmedabad Congress be not started till the 31st of January or pending the result of the negotiations undertaken by the committee of the Malaviya Conference for a round table conference, whichever may be the first date."

The attempts of the intermediaries, however, failed. The Viceroy summarily rejected the terms offered by the conference. Although the peace-makers had been sending hectic telegrams to the Viceroy from January 16, they received a letter on January 30 by post from the Viceroy's private secretary stating that the Government were not in a position to summon a round table conference as desired by them. Further efforts of the intermediaries seeking interviews with the Viceroy proved barren.

The Congress leaders did not regret the result, as they shared Gandhi's belief that the Government had not done their worst and the people had not done their best in the campaign. It was considered premature to reach a settlement. "India can never attain freedom by going along the route the Government will take her," said Gandhi. People's attention was riveted by him on the inevitable campaign. "Civil disobedience being an indefeasible right, the preparations for it will continue even if the conference comes off." The preparations consisted in the enlistment of volunteers, propaganda of swadeshi, removal of untouchability, training in non-violence and unity between all creeds and classes.

On January 29 the people of Bardoli took a momentous decision to launch mass civil disobedience. Vithalbhai Patel presided over a conference of the representatives of the taluk and made a speech impressive for its warning. There was an audience of khaddar-clad representatives numbering 4,000, including 500 women.

Gandhi took the sense of the meeting on each of the conditions of civil disobedience campaign: "They understood the implications of Hindu-Muslim-Parsi-Christian unity. They realized the significance and the truth and non-violence. They saw what the removal of untouchability meant; they were prepared, not merely to take into national schools, but to induce the 'untouchable' to join them; they have had no objection to the 'untouchable' drawing water from the village wells. They knew that they were to nurse the 'untouchable' sick as they would nurse their ailing neighbours. They knew that they could not exercise the privilege of non-payment of revenue and other forms of civil disobedience until they had purified themselves in the manner described by me. They knew too, that they had to become industrious and spin their own yarn and weave their own khadi. Lastly, they were ready to face imprisonment, and even death, if necessary, and they would do all this without resentment."

After having fully understood and considered the conditions as essential for the starting of mass civil disobedience, the inhabitants of Bardoli solemnly resolved: "This conference hopes that the Bardoli taluk will have the privilege to be the first for the aforesaid sacrifices, and this conference respectfully informs the Working Committee that unless the Working Committee otherwise decides or unless the proposed round table conference is held, this taluk will immediately commence mass civil disobedience under the advice and guidance of Gandhiji and the president of the conference." The conference further recommended that those taxpayers of the taluk who were ready and willing to abide by the necessary conditions would refrain, till further instruction, from paying land revenue and other taxes due to the Government.

The Working Committee of the Congress met on January 31 at Surat, and authorized the people of Bardoli to start the campaign. The committee advised all other parts of India to co-operate in the Bardoli satyagraha by refraining from mass or individual civil disobedience of aggressive character, except upon the express consent of Gandhi previously obtained.

The period of postponement of the struggle expired on the 31st. Gandhi could no longer wait, and in the teeth of opposition from Jinnah and Malaviya he declared that Bardoli's determination was "final and irrevocable". His ultimatum to Lord Reading was sent on February 1:

"Bardoli is a small tahsil in the Surat district in the Bombay Presidency, having a population of about 87,000 all told.

"On the 29th ultimo it decided under the presidency of Vithalbhai Patel to embark on mass civil disobedience, having proved its fitness for it in terms of the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee which met at Delhi during the first week of November last. But as I am perhaps chiefly responsible for Bardoli's decision, I owe it to Your Excellency and the public to explain the situation under which the decision has been taken.

"It was intended under the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee, before referred to, to make the district of Bardoli the first unit for mass civil disobedience in order to mark the national revolt against the Government of India for its consistently criminal refusal to appreciate India's just resolve regarding the Khilafat, the Punjab and swaraj.

"Then followed the unfortunate and regrettable rioting in Bombay on the 17th November last, resulting in the postponement of the step contemplated by Bardoli.

"Meanwhile repression of virulent type has taken place with the concurrence of the Government of India in Bengal, Assam, United Provinces, the Punjab, the Province of Delhi, and in a way in Bihar and Orissa and elsewhere. I know that you have objected to the use of the word 'repression' for describing the action of the authorities in these provinces. In my opinion when action is taken which is in excess to the requirements of a situation, it is undoubtedly repression. The looting of property, assaults on innocent people, the brutal treatment of prisoners in the jails including flogging can in no sense be described as legal, civilized or in any way necessary. This official lawlessness cannot be described by any other term but lawless repression. Intimidation by non-co-operators or their sympathizers to a certain extent in connection with hartals and picketing may be admitted, but in no case can it be held to justify the wholesale supression of peaceful volunteering or equally peaceful public meetings under a distorted use of an extraordinary law which was passed in order to deal with activities which were manifestly violent both in intention and action, nor is it possible to designate as otherwise than repression, action taken against innocent people under what has appeared to many of us an illegal use of the ordinary law, nor again can the administrative interference with the liberty of the press under a law that is under promise of repeal be regarded as anything but repression.

"The immediate task before the country, therefore, is to rescue from paralysis freedom of speech, freedom of association and freedom of the press. In the present mood of the Government of India and in the present unprepared state of the country in respect of complete control of the forces of violence, non-co-operators were unwilling to have anything to do with the Malaviya Conference whose object was to induce Your Excellency to convene a round table conference. But I was anxious to avoid all avoidable suffering. I had no hesitation in advising the Working Committee of the Congress to accept the recommendations of that conference. Although in my opinion the terms were quite in keeping with your own requirements, as I understood them through your Calcutta speech and otherwise, you have summarily rejected the proposal.

"In the circumstances, there is nothing before the country but to adopt some non-violent method for the enforcement of its demands including the elementary rights of free speech, free association and free press. In my humble opinion, the recent events are a clear departure from the civilized policy laid down by Your Excellency at the time of the generous, manly and unconditional apology of the Ali brothers, namely, the Government should not interfere with the activities of non-co-operation so long as they remained non-violent in word and deed. Had the Government's policy remained neutral and allowed public opinion to ripen and have its full effect, it would have been possible to advise postponement of mass civil disobedience of an aggressive type till the Congress had acquired fuller control over the forces of violence in the country and enforced greater discipline among the millions of its adherents. But this lawless repression—unparalleled in the history of this unfortunate country—has made the immediate adoption of civil disobedience an imperative duty. The Working Committee of the Congress has restricted it to only certain areas to be selected by me from time to time, and at present it is confined only to Bardoli. I may, under the said authority, give my consent at once in respect of a group of hundred villages in Guntur in the Madras Presidency, provided they can strictly conform to the conditions of non-violence, unity among different classes, the adoption and manufacture of hand-spun khadi, and untouchability.

"But before the people of Bardoli actually commence mass civil disobedience, I would respectfully urge you as head of the Government of India, finally to revise your policy and set free all the non-co-operating prisoners who are convicted or under trial for non-violent activities, and to declare in clear terms a policy of absolute non-interference with all non-violent activities in the country, whether they be regarding the redress of the Khilafat or the Punjab wrongs or swaraj or any other purpose and even though they fall under the repressive sections of the Penal Code or the Criminal Procedure Code or other repressive laws subject always to the condition of non-violence. I would further urge you to free the press from all administrative control and to restore all the fines and forfeitures recently imposed. In thus urging I am asking Your Excellency to do what is being done today in every country which is deemed to be under civilized government. If you can see your way to make the

necessary declaration within seven days of the date of publication of this manifesto, I shall be prepared to advise postponement of civil disobedience of an aggressive character, till the imprisoned workers have, after their discharge, reviewed the situation and considered the position *de novo*. If the Government make the requested declaration I shall regard it as an honest desire on its part to give effect to public opinion and shall have no hesitation in advising the country to be engaged in further moulding public opinion without violent restraint from either side and trust to its working to secure the fulfilment of its unalterable demands. Aggressive civil disobedience in that case will be taken up only when the Government departs from its policy of strictest neutrality or refuse to yield to clearly expressed opinion of the vast majority of the people of India."

On February 6 the Government issued a communique, rejecting all the demands made by Gandhi. The Viceroy justified the repressive policy as being only the result of the Bombay riots and the dangerous manifestations of lawlessness in other places, intimidation and obstruction by volunteer association. On February 7 Gandhi sent a rejoinder to the Government. He catalogued "facts beyond challenge", for example, shooting in Calcutta, brutality of the civil guards, forcible dispersal of meetings in Dacca and Aligarh, brutal and uncalled for assaults upon volunteers and the public in Lahore, Jullundur, and Dehra Dun, looting of villages in Bihar and the assaults upon volunteers and burning of khaddar and papers belonging to the Congress at Sonepur, midnight searches and arrests in Congress and Khilafat offices. He said they were only a sample of the many infallible proofs of official lawlessness and barbarism, "a tithe of what is happening all over the country".

The ultimatum and the rejoinder were sent from Bardoli where Gandhi had gone to lead the campaign. The country was agog. Scarcely had the rejoinder been despatched, when on February 8, the morning papers conveyed the news of disturbances on the 5th instant at Chauri Chaura, a village in Gorakhpur district, U.P. During a procession at Chauri Chaura, or rather after the procession had passed, some stragglers were interfered with and abused by the constables. Trouble started and the constables opened fire, and when they exhausted their ammunition they retired to the *thana*. The mob set fire to the *thana*, where twenty-two constables were burnt alive. Gandhi was profoundly shocked.

On the spur of the moment Gandhi decided to scrap the plan of mass campaign. The situation was complicated, as only a few days earlier, he had sent his ultimatum to the Viceroy. How could he retract it without making his programme look rediculous? "Satan," said Gandhi, "forbade it." Realizing that "Satan's" voice was the voice of pride, he decided to retract the ultimatum.

On February 11 he put "his doubts and troubles" before the members of the Congress Working Committee. They did not agree with him, but at his request it was decided to cancel the programme of mass civil disobedience and to substitute a constructive programme of spinning, temperance, reform and educational activities.

Gandhi imposed on himself a five days' fast on February 12. He did not want his co-workers to follow his example. He must punish himself adequately.

On February 16 there appeared in *Young India* one of the most extraordinary human documents ever written:

"God has been abundantly kind to me. He has warned me the third time that there is not as yet in India that non-violent and truthful atmosphere which alone can justify mass civil disobedience, which can be at all described as civil which means gentle, truthful, humble, knowing, wilful yet loving, never criminal and hateful.

"He warned me in 1919 when the Rowlatt Act agitation was started. Ahmedabad, Viramgam and Kheda erred; Amritsar and Kasur erred. I retraced my steps, called it a Himalayan miscalculation, humbled myself before God and man, and stopped not merely mass civil disobedience but even my own, which I knew was intended to be civil and non-violent.

"The next time it was through the events of Bombay that God gave a terriffic warning. He made me eyewitness of the deeds of Bombay mob on the 17th November. The mob acted in the interest of non-co-operation. I announced my intention to stop the mass civil disobedience which was to be immediately started in Bardoli. The humiliation was greater than in 1919. But it did me good. I am sure that the nation gained by the stopping. India stood for truth and non-violence by the suspension.

"But the bitterest humiliation was still to come. Madras did give the warning, but I heeded it not. But God spoke clearly through Chauri Chaura. I understand that the constables who were so brutally hacked to death had given much provocation. They had

even gone back upon the word just given by the inspector that they would not be molested, but when the procession had passed, the stragglers were interfered with and abused by the constables. The former cried out for help. The mob returned. The constables opened fire. The little ammunition they had was exhausted and they retired to the *thana* for safety. The mob, my informant tells me, therefore, set fire to the *thana*. The self-imprisoned constables had to come out for dear life and as they did so, they were hacked to pieces and the mangled remains were thrown into the raging flames.

"It is claimed that no non-co-operation volunteer had a hand in the brutality and that the mob had not only the immediate provocation but had also general knowledge of the high-handed tyranny of the police in that district. No provocation can possibly justify the brutal murder of men who had been rendered defenceless and who had virtually thrown themselves on the mercy of the mob. And when India claims to be non-violent and hopes to mount the throne of liberty through non-violent means, mob violence even in answer to grave provocation is a bad augury. Suppose the non-violent disobedience of Bardoli was permitted by God to succeed, the India Government had abdicated in favour of the victors of Bardoli, who would control the unruly element that must be expected to perpetuate inhumanity upon due provocation? Non-violent attainment of self-government presupposes a non-violent control over the violent elements in the country. Non-violent non-co-operators can only succeed when they have succeeded in attaining control over the hooligans of India, in other words, when the latter have also learnt patriotically or religiously to refrain from their violent activities at least while the campaign of non-co-operation is going on. The tragedy at Chauri Chaura, therefore, roused me thoroughly.

" 'What about your manifesto to the Viceroy and your rejoinder to his reply?' spoke the voice of Satan. It was the bitterest cup of humiliation to drink. 'Surely it is cowardly to withdraw the next day after pompous threats to the Government and promises to the people of Bardoli.' Satan's invitation was to deny truth and, therefore, religion, to deny God Himself. I put my doubts and troubles before the Working Committee and other associates whom I found near me. They did not all agree with me at first. Some of them probably do not even now agree with me. But never has a man been blessed, perhaps, with colleagues and associates so considerate and forgiving

as I have. They understood my difficulty and patiently followed my argument. The result is before the public in the shape of the resolutions of the Working Committee. The drastic reversal of practically the whole of the aggressive programme may be politically unsound and unwise, but there is no doubt that it is religiously sound, and I venture to assure the doubters that the country will have gained by my humiliation and confession of error.

"The only virtue I want to claim is truth and non-violence. I lay no claim to superhuman powers. I want none. I wear the same corruptible flesh that the weakest of my fellow beings wears and am as liable to err as any. My services have many limitations, but God has up to now blessed them in spite of the imperfections.

"For, confession of error is like a broom that sweeps away dirt and leaves the surface cleaner than before. I feel stronger for my confession. And the cause must prosper for the retracing. Never has man reached his destination by persistence in deviation from the straight path.

"It has been urged that Chauri Chaura cannot affect Bardoli. There is danger, it is argued, only if Bardoli is weak enough to be swayed by Chauri Chaura and is betrayed into violence. I have no doubt whatsoever on that account. The people of Bardoli are in my opinion the most peaceful in India. But Bardoli is but a speck on the map of India. Its effort cannot succeed unless there is perfect co-operation from the other parts. Bardoli's disobedience will be civil when the other parts of India remain non-violent. Just as the addition of a grain of arsenic to a pot of milk renders it unfit as food so will the civility of Bardoli prove unacceptable by the addition of the deadly poison from Chauri Chaura. The latter represents India as much as Bardoli.

"Chauri Chaura is after all an aggravated symptom. I have never imagined that there has been no violence, mental or physical, in the places where repression is going on. Only I have believed, I still believe, and the pages of *Young India* amply prove, that the repression is out of all proportion to the insignificant popular violence in the areas of repression. The determined holding of meetings in prohibited areas I do not call violence. The violence I am referring to is the throwing of brickbats or intimidation and coercion practised in stray cases. As a matter of fact, in civil disobedience there should be no excitement. Civil disobedience is a preparation for mute suffering.

Its effect is marvellous though unperceived and gentle. But I regarded certain amount of excitement as inevitable, certain amount of unintended violence pardonable, that is, I did not consider civil disobedience impossible in somewhat imperfect conditions. Under perfect conditions, disobedience when civil is hardly felt. But the present movement is admittedly a dangerous experiment under fairly adverse conditions.

"The tragedy of Chauri Chaura is really the index-finger. It shows the way India may easily go, if drastic precautions be not taken. If we are not to evolve violence out of non-violence, it is quite clear that we must hastily retrace our steps and re-establish an atmosphere of peace, rearrange our programme and not think of starting mass civil disobedience until we are sure of peace being retained in spite of mass civil disobedience being started and in spite of Government provocation. We must be sure of unauthorized portions not starting mass civil disobedience.

"As it is, the Congress organization is still imperfect and its instructions are perfunctorily carried out. We have not established Congress committees in every one of the villages. Where we have, they are not perfectly amenable to our instructions. We have not probably more than one crore of members on the roll. We are in the middle of February, yet not many have paid the annual four annas subscription for the current year. Volunteers are indifferently enrolled. They do not conform to all the conditions of their pledge. They do not even wear hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar. All the Hindu volunteers have not yet purged themselves of the sin of untouchability. All are not free from the taint of violence. Not by their imprisonment are we going to win swaraj or serve the holy cause of the Khilafat or attain the ability to stop payment to faithless servants. Some of us err in spite of ourselves. But some others among us sin wilfully. They join volunteer corps, well knowing that they are not and do not intend to remain non-violent. We are thus untruthful even as we hold the Government to be untruthful. We dare not enter the kingdom of liberty with mere lip-homage to truth and non-violence.

"Suspension of mass civil disobedience and subsidence of excitement are necessary for further progress and indeed indispensable to prevent further retrogression. I hope, therefore, that by suspension of the campaign every Congressman or woman will not only not

feel disappointed but he or she will feel relieved of the burden of unreality and of national sin.

"Let the opponent glory in our humiliation or so-called defeat. It is better to be charged with cowardice and weakness than to be guilty of denial of our oath and sin against God. It is indeed million times better to appear untrue before the world than to be untrue to ourselves.

"And so, for me the suspension of mass civil disobedience and other minor activities that were calculated to keep up excitement is not enough penance for my having been the instrument, howsoever involuntary, of the brutal violence by the people at Chauri Chaura.

"I must undergo personal cleansing. I must become a fitter instrument able to register the slightest variation in the moral atmosphere about me. My prayers must have much deeper truth and greater humility about them than they evince. And for me, there is nothing so helpful and cleansing as a fast accompanied by the necessary mental co-operation.

"I know that the mental attitude is everything. Just as a prayer may be merely a mechanical intonation as of a bird, so may a fast be a mere mechanical torture of the flesh. Such mechanical contrivances are valueless for the purpose intended. Again, just as a mechanical chant may result in the modulation of voice, a mechanical fast may result in purifying the body. Neither will touch the soul within.

"But a fast undertaken for fuller self-expression, for attainment of the spirit's supremacy over the flesh, is a most powerful factor in one's evolution. After deep consideration, therefore, I am imposing on myself a five days' continuous fast, permitting myself water. It commenced on Sunday evening, it ends on Friday evening. This is the least I must do.

"I have taken into consideration the All-India Congress Committee meeting in front of me. I have in mind the anxious pain even the five days' fast will cause many friends; but I can no longer postpone the penance nor lessen it.

"I urge co-workers not to copy my example. The motive in their case will be lacking. They are not the originators of civil disobedience. I am in the unhappy position of a surgeon proved skilless to deal with an admittedly dangerous case. I must either abdicate or acquire greater skill. Whilst personal penance is not only necessary

but obligatory on me, the exemplary self-restraint prescribed by the Working Committee is surely sufficient penance for every one else. It is no small penance and if sincerely carried out, it can become infinitely more real and better than fasting. What can be richer and more fruitful than a greater fulfilment of the vow of non-violence in thought, word and deed, or the spread of that spirit? It will be more than food for me during the week to observe that comrades are all silently and without idle discussion, engaged in fulfilling the constructive programme sketched by the Working Committee, in enlisting members after making sure that they understand the Congress creed of truth and non-violence for the attainment of swaraj, in daily and religiously spinning for a fixed time, in introducing the wheel of prosperity and freedom in every home, in visiting the 'untouchable' homes and finding out their wants, in inducing national schools to receive 'untouchable' children, in organizing social service specially designed to find a common platform for every variety of man and woman, in visiting the homes which the drink curse is desolating, in establishing real panchayats and in organizing national schools on a proper footing. The workers will be better engaged in these activities than in fasting. I hope, therefore, that no one will join me in fasting, either through false sympathy or an ignorant conception of the spiritual value of fasting.

"All fasting and all penance must as far as possible be secret. But my fasting is both a penance and punishment, and a punishment has to be public. It is penance for me and punishment for those whom I try to serve, for whom I love to live and would equally love to die. They have unintentionally sinned against the laws of the Congress though they were sympathizers if not actually connected with it. Probably they hacked the constables—their countrymen and fellow beings—with my name on their lips. The only way love punishes is by suffering. I cannot even wish them to be arrested. I would let them know that I would suffer for their breach of the Congress creed. I would advise those who feel guilty and repentant to hand themselves voluntarily to the Government for punishment and make a clean confession. I hope that the workers in the Gorakhpur district will leave no stone unturned to find out the evil-doers and urge them to deliver themselves into custody. But whether the murderers accept my advice or not, I would like them to know that they have seriously interfered with swaraj operations, that in being the cause

of the postponement of the movement in Bardoli, they have injured the very cause they probably intended to serve. I would like them to know too that this movement is not a cloak or a preparation for violence. I would suffer every humiliation, every torture, absolute ostracism and death itself to prevent the movement from becoming violent or a precursor of violence. I make my penance public also, because I am now denying myself the opportunity of sharing their lot with the prisoners. The immediate issue has again shifted, we can no longer press for the withdrawal of notifications or discharge of prisoners. They and we must suffer for the crime of Chauri Chaura. The incident proves, whether we wish it or no, the unity of life. All, including even the administrators, must suffer. Chauri Chaura must stiffen the Government, must still further corrupt the police, and the reprisals that will follow must further demoralize the people. The suspension and the penance will take us back to the position we occupied before the tragedy. By strict discipline and purification we regain moral confidence required for demanding withdrawal of notifications and the discharge of prisoners.

"If we learn the full lesson of the tragedy, we can turn the curse into a blessing. By becoming truthful and non-violent, both in spirit and deed, and by making the swadeshi, that is, the khaddar programme complete, we can establish full swaraj and redress the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs without a single person having to offer civil disobedience."

The sudden stoppage of the movement came as a shock. The Bardoli decision created consternation among the Congress leaders most of whom were in prison, and left the rank and file angry. Gandhi was attacked from all sides. Motilal Nehru, Lajpat Rai and others sent from prison angry letters to Gandhi protesting against his decision. Why should, asked Motilal Nehru, a town at the foot of the Himalayas be penalized, if a village at Cape Comorin failed to observe non-violence? Isolate Chauri Chaura and Gorakhpur, but go on with civil disobedience, individual and mass.

On February 19 Gandhi wrote to Jawaharlal who was in jail:

"I see that all of you are terribly cut up over the resolutions of the Working Committee. I sympathize with you, and my heart goes out to father. I can picture to myself the agony through which he must have passed, but I also feel that this letter is unnecessary, because I know that the first shock must have been followed by a true

understanding of the situation. Let us not be obsessed by Devadas' youthful indiscretions. It is quite possible that the poor boy has been swept off his feet and that he has lost his balance, but the brutal murder of the constables by an infuriated crowd which was in sympathy with non-co-operation cannot be denied. Nor can it be denied that it was a politically-minded crowd. It would have been criminal not to have heeded such a clear warning.

"I must tell you that this was the last straw. My letter to the Viceroy was not sent without misgivings as its language must make it clear to any one. I was much disturbed by the Madras doings, but I drowned the warning voice. I received letters both from Hindus and Muslims from Calcutta, Allahabad and the Punjab, all these before the Gorakhpur incident, telling me that the wrong was not all on the Government side, that our people were becoming aggressive, defiant and threatening, that they were getting out of hand and were not non-violent in demeanour. Whilst the Ferozepur Jirka incident is discreditable to the Government, we are not altogether without blame. Hakimji complained about Bareilly. I have bitter complaints about Jajjar. In Shahjahanpur too there has been a forcible attempt to take possession of the town hall. From Kanouj too the Congress secretary himself telegraphed saying that the volunteer boys had become unruly and were picketing a high school and preventing youngsters from going to their school. About thirty-six thousand volunteers were enlisted in Gorakhpur, not hundred of whom conformed to the Congress pledge. In Calcutta, Jamnalalji tells me there is utter disorganization, the volunteers wearing even foreign cloth and not pledged to non-violence. With all this news in my possession and much more from the south, the Chauri Chaura news came like a powerful match to ignite the gunpowder, and there was a blaze. I assure you that if the thing had not been suspended we would have been leading not a non-violent struggle but essentially a violent struggle. It is true that non-violence is spreading like the scent of the otto of roses throughout the length and breadth of the land, but the foetid smell of violence is still powerful, and it would be unwise to ignore or underrate it. The cause will prosper by this retreat. The movement had unconsciously drifted from the right path. We have come back to our moorings, and we can again go straight ahead. You are in as disadvantageous a position as I am advantageously placed for judging events in their due proportion.

"May I give you my own experience of South Africa? We had all kinds of news brought to us in South Africa in our jails. For two or three days during my first experience I was glad enough to receive titbits, but I immediately realized the utter futility of interesting myself in this illegal gratification. I could do nothing. I could send no message profitably, and I simply vexed my soul uselessly. I felt that it was impossible for me to guide the movement from the jail. I, simply waited till I could meet those who were outside and talk to them freely, and then too, I want you to believe me when I tell you that I took only an academic interest because I felt it was not my province to judge anything, and I saw how unerringly right I was. I well remember how the thoughts I had up to the time of my discharge from the jail on every occasion were modified immediately after discharge and after getting first-hand information myself. Somehow or other the jail atmosphere does not allow you to have all the bearings in your mind. I would, therefore, like you to dismiss the outer world from your view altogether and ignore its existence. I know this is a difficult task, but if you take up some serious study and some serious manual work you can do it. Above all, whatever you do, don't you be disgusted with the spinning wheel. You and I might have reason to get disgusted with ourselves for having done many things and having believed many things, but we shall never have the slightest cause for regret that we have pinned our faith to the spinning wheel or that we have spun so much good yarn per day in the name of the motherland. You have *The Song Celestial* with you. I cannot give you the inimitable translation of Edwin Arnold, but this is the rendering of the Sanskrit text: 'There is no waste of energy, there is no destruction in this. Even a little of this *dharma* saves one from many a pitfall.' This *dharma* in the original refers to Karma Yoga, and the Karma Yoga of our age is the spinning wheel. I want a cheering letter from you after the freezing dose you have sent me through Pyarelal."

The Bardoli decision emboldened the Government. Mr. Montagu, the Secretary of State, stated: "If the existence of our empire were challenged, the discharge of responsibilities of the British Government to India prevented and demands were made in the very mistaken belief that we contemplate retreat from India—then India would not challenge with success the most determined people in the world, who would once again answer the challenge with all the

vigour and determination at its command." Lord Birkenhead, the Tory spokesman, reminded India that Britain had lost none of her "hard fibre".

Gandhi promptly took up the challenge in an editorial entitled "Shaking the Manes", in *Young India* dated February 23:

"How can there be any compromise whilst the British lion continues to shake his gory claws in our faces? Lord Birkenhead reminds us that Britain has lost none of her hard fibre. Mr. Montagu tells us in the plainest language that the British are the most determined nation in the world, who will brook no interference with their purpose...

"Lord Birkenhead and Mr. Montagu little know that India is prepared for all 'the hard fibre' that can be transported across the seas and that her challenge was issued in the September of 1920 at Calcutta that India would be satisfied with nothing less than swaraj and full redress of the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs. This does involve the existence of the 'empire', and if the present custodians of the British Empire are not satisfied with its quiet transformation into a true commonwealth of free nations, each with equal rights and each having the power to secede at will from an honourable and friendly partnership, all the determination and vigour of 'the most determined people in the world' and the 'hard fibre' will have to be spent in India in a vain effort to crush the spirit that has risen and that will neither bend nor break. It is true that we have no 'hard fibre'. The rice-eating, puny millions of India seem to have resolved upon achieving their own destiny without any further tutelage and without arms. In the Lokamanya's language it is their 'birthright' and they will have it, in spite of the 'hard fibre' and in spite of the vigour and determination with which it may be administered. India cannot and will not answer this insolence with insolence, but if she remains true to her pledge, her prayer to God to be delivered from such a scourge will certainly not go in vain. No empire intoxicated with the red wine of power and plunder of weaker races has yet lived long in this world, and this British Empire, which is based upon organized exploitation of physically weaker races of the earth and upon a continuous exhibition of brute force, cannot live if there is a just God ruling the universe. Little do these so-called representatives of the British nation realize that India has already given many of her best men to be dealt with by the British 'hard

fibre'. Had Chauri Chaura not interrupted the even course of the national sacrifice, there would have been still greater and more delectable offerings placed before the lion, but God had willed it otherwise. There is nothing, to prevent all those representatives in Downing Street and Whitehall from doing their worst. I am aware that I have written strongly about the insolent threat that has come from across the seas, but it is high time that the British people were made to realize that the fight that was commenced in 1920 is a fight to the finish, whether it lasts one month or one year or many months or many years and whether the representatives of Britain re-enact all the orgies of the Mutiny days with re-doubled force or whether they do not. I shall only hope and pray that God will give India sufficient humility and sufficient strength to remain non-violent to the end. Submission to the insolent challenges that are cabled out on due occasions is now an utter impossibility."

When the All-India Congress Committee met on February 24 at Delhi, Gandhi had to face the music. Before the meeting commenced he had a talk with the representatives of various provinces. The Working Committee met the delegates before framing its resolution. In that meeting Gandhi read out letters from Motilal Nehru and Lajpat Rai strongly condemning the Bardoli resolution. In reply he had but one word to say, that those who went to jail were civilly dead and could not claim or be expected to advise those outside. He asked the delegates to think for themselves.

In the A.-I.C.C. meeting Gandhi moved his resolution which was the Bardoli resolution modified in respect of the restoration of the right of individual civil disobedience and the right of picketing of foreign cloth shops and liquor booths with the permission of the provincial committee concerned. Gandhi said that before civil disobedience could be launched, the people must be better prepared and he submitted a constructive programme. Several members were irritated at the slow progress of the movement, and they protested against the suspension of civil disobedience. Gandhi's methods, they said, were stifling the nation's ardour. Dr. Moonje and Mr. J. M. Sengupta suggested that this resolution be annulled. Maharashtra and Bengal openly opposed Gandhi. Why should civil disobedience not be continued? Why should a civil resister wear khaddar? Dr. Moonje had already confronted the Working Committee with a resolution of the Nagpur District Congress Committee permitting

reservation in untouchability and swadeshi. Every line of the Bardoli resolution was subjected to scathing criticism. A vote of censure on Gandhi was moved by Dr. Moonje. Gandhi did not utter a word in self-defence. In the absence of Hakim Ajmal Khan when Gandhi took the chair, he allowed the supporters of Dr. Moonje to speak and requested those in opposition to refrain from delivering any speech. The storm blew over.

In the end Gandhi triumphed. But he suffered keenly, for he realized that the majority was not backing him sincerely. He knew that some of those who voted for him called him "dictator" behind his back. He knew that he no longer reflected the sentiment of the country. And he admitted this on March 2:

"There is so much undercurrent of violence both conscious and unconscious, that I was actually and literally praying for a disastrous defeat. I have always been in a minority. In South Africa I started with practical unanimity, reached a minority of sixty-four and even sixteen, and went up again to a huge majority. The best and the most solid work was done in the wilderness of minority. I know that the only thing that the Government dreads is this huge majority I seem to command. They little know that I dread it even more than they. I have become literally sick of the adoration of the unthinking multitude. I would feel certain of my ground if I was spat upon by them. A friend warned me against exploiting my 'dictatorship'. I have begun to wonder if I am not unconsciously allowing myself to be 'exploited'. I confess that I have a dread of it as I never had before. My only safety lies in my shamelessness. I have warned my friends of the committee that I am incorrigible. I shall continue to confess blunders each time the people commit them. The only tyrant I accept in this world is the 'still small voice' within. And even though I have to face the prospect of a minority of one, I humbly believe I have the courage to be in such a hopeless minority. That to me is the only truthful position. But I am a sadder and, I hope, a wiser man today. I see that our non-violence is skin-deep. We are burning with indignation. The Government is feeding it by its insensate acts. It seems almost as if the Government wants to see this land covered with murder, arson, and rapine in order to be able once more to claim exclusive ability to put them down.

"This non-violence, therefore, seems to be due merely to our helplessness. It almost appears as if we are nursing in our bosoms the

desire to take revenge the first time we get the opportunity. Can true voluntary non-violence come out of this seeming forced non-violence of the weak? Is it not a futile experiment I am conducting? What if, when the fury bursts, not a man, woman, or child is safe and every man's hand is raised against his fellow being? Of what avail is it, then, if I fast myself to death in the event of such a catastrophe coming to pass? Let us be truthful. If it is by force that we wish to gain swaraj, let us drop non-violence and offer such violence as we may. It would be a manly, honest and sober attitude, and no one can then accuse us of the terrible charge of hypocrisy. If, in spite of all my warning, the majority did not believe in our goal, although they accepted it without a single material change, I would ask them to realize their responsibility. They are not bound to rush to civil disobedience, but to settle down to the quiet work of construction. If we do not take care, we are likely to be drowned in the waters whose depth we do not know."

And, turning to the minority, Gandhi said:

"The patriotic spirit demands loyal and strict adherence to non-violence and truth. Those who do not believe in them should retire from the Congress organization."

There was bitter sadness in these words. Gandhi's arrest was imminent. He wrote:

"My removal from their midst will be a benefit to the people. First, the superstition about the possession of supernatural powers by me will be demolished. Secondly, the belief that the people have accepted the non-co-operation programme only under my influence and that they have no independent faith in it will be disproved. Thirdly, our capacity for swaraj will be proved by our ability to conduct our activities in spite of the withdrawal of the originators of the current programme. Fourthly and selfishly, it will give me a quiet and physical rest, which perhaps I deserve."

## *The Great Trial*

1922

Lord Reading was certain that the Bardoli resolutions were the beginning of the end for non-co-operation. Nevertheless, the resolutions put the Viceroy in a dilemma. The calling off of the campaign forced the Government to think over their next move. Arrangements had been made for Gandhi's arrest and on the very day, February 12, 1922, on which the resolutions were passed, Lord Reading had informed Montagu that the Bombay Government had been instructed to effect the arrest on the 14th. Lord Reading was of the opinion that the mere calling off of the civil disobedience made no material change in the indictment against Gandhi, since the movement was only postponed. Moreover, opinion in England was restive over Gandhi's continued freedom, and Montagu telegraphed early in February saying that he was "puzzled" at the delay in making the arrest. A debate was to take place in Parliament on the 14th, and both Reading and Montagu were anxious that, as the arrest had to be made, it should be made in time for Parliament to be informed of it as a *fait accompli*. But at this point, the Indian members of the Viceroy's Council made the strongest possible representations in favour of delay, and Lord Reading, after careful thought, decided that the risks of a little delay were on the whole less than those of immediate action, which would be open to criticism in India and abroad. He postponed the arrest, asked the Governors of Bombay, Bengal and Madras to come to Delhi and talk the matter over with him. It was agreed that the Government of India would move against Gandhi at a suitable moment.

Gandhi had for a long time been expecting to be arrested. He referred to this possibility again in an article, "If I am arrested," dated March 9: "The rumour has been revived that my arrest is imminent. It is said to be regarded as a mistake by some officials that I was not arrested when I was to be on the 11th or 12th of

February and that the Bardoli decision ought not to have been allowed to affect the Government's programme. It is said, too, that it is now no longer possible for the Government to withstand the ever-rising agitation in London for my arrest and deportation. I myself cannot see how the Government can avoid arresting me if they want a permanent abandonment of civil disobedience whether individual or mass."

"Rivers of bloodshed by the Government cannot frighten me," he said. The thing he feared was, that the people might be carried away by news of his arrest. "I desire that the people should maintain perfect self-control and consider the day of my arrest, a day of rejoicing. The Government believes that I am the soul of all agitation and if I am removed it will be left in peace. The only thing that remains is for it to measure the strength of the people. Let the people preserve perfect peace and calmness. It is a matter of no pride or pleasure to me, but of humiliation, that the Government refrains from arresting me for fear of an outbreak of universal violence." Let the people carry out the whole constructive programme. Let there be no hartals or demonstrations, no co-operation with the Government. Let, in short, the programme of non-co-operation be pursued in absolute order and discipline. If the people lived up to this programme, they would win.

From the 8th of March the rumours of his arrest began to thicken. He left for Ajmer that day on an urgent invitation. It was thought that he might be arrested on the way. A suspicious telegram from Ajmer made Kasturbai to run up to the Sabarmati station to see him safely return. He reached the ashram on the 10th.

At the ashram the rumour was being received with indifference. For, there had been so many final partings since he had decided to start civil disobedience in November last that the idea of imprisonment became common. The daily routine was not disturbed in the least by these rumours any more. Only when the evening came and the bell rang out the hour of prayer, there was a sudden hush all around as all inmates of the ashram proceeded with anxious and hasty steps to join Gandhi in his last prayer, perhaps for a long time to come. To the congregation Gandhi mentioned the rumour of his arrest. He said he was expecting it that very night.

After the prayer he returned to his work as usual and dictated replies to some correspondence. Then he gave instructions to his

colleagues about conducting *Young India* after his arrest. Friends continued to stream in from the city bringing titbits of news which went to confirm the prevailing rumour.

Gandhi arose at about quarter to ten for his last ablutions before retiring, and the small assembly that had all this time surrounded him began to disperse. Shankarlal Banker who had come to take instructions departed. He had not gone far from the ashram when the superintendent of police put him under arrest. The police party then arrived in the ashram and the superintendent sent word to Gandhi that he could take as much time as he wanted. In the meanwhile, inmates of the ashram had all come to Gandhi's hut. He had a word for each of them. Then he asked them to sing the song of Narsinh Mehta, the saint of Gujarat, depicting the qualities of a Vaishnava. The song over, he blessed all, embraced Hasrat Mohani who had come from far, took his seat in the car kept ready for the purpose and was taken to the Sabarmati jail, in the night of Friday, March 10. Kasturbai was allowed to accompany him as far as the prison gates. Gandhi took with him an extra loin-cloth, two blankets and five books—the Gita, the Ramayana, Rodwell's translation of the Koran, the ashram hymn-book, a copy of the Sermon on the Mount sent by schoolboys from California.

On the 11th noon Gandhi and Shankarlal Banker were placed before Mr. Brown, who held his court at the commissioner's office in Shahibag outside the city proper and under the shelter of the cantonment. The superintendent of police, Ahmedabad, the first witness, produced the Bombay Government's authority to lodge a complaint for four articles in *Young India*—"Disaffection a Virtue", "Tampering with Loyalty", "The Puzzle and its Solution", and "Shaking the Manes".

Gandhi, aged fifty-three, who described himself as farmer and weaver by profession, residing at the Sabarmati ashram, said:

"I simply wish to state that when the proper time comes, I shall plead guilty so far as disaffection towards the Government is concerned. It is quite true that I am the editor of *Young India* and that the articles read in my presence were written by me and the proprietors and publishers had permitted me to control the whole policy of the paper."

The case having been committed to the sessions, he was taken to the Sabarmati jail where he was detained till the hearing, which

was to come off on March 18. The week before the trial was passed in receiving visitors who were generally permitted to see Gandhi without restriction. He was allowed to carry on correspondence so long as it was harmless and submitted to the superintendent. He wrote a few letters to his colleagues, urging the continuance of constructive work. In a letter dated March 12, he wrote to Hakim Ajmal Khan, the Congress President:

"Nothing can possibly unify and revivify India as the acceptance by all India of the spinning wheel as a daily sacrament and the khaddar wear as a privilege and a duty. Whilst, therefore, I am anxious that more title-holders should give up their titles, scholars the government schools or colleges, the councillors the councils and the soldiers and civilians their posts, I would urge the nation to restrict its activity only to the consolidation of the results already achieved and to trust its strength to command further abstentions from association with a system we are seeking to mend or end. I flatter myself with the belief that my imprisonment is quite enough for a long time to come. I believe in all humility that I have no ill will against any one. Some of my friends would not have to be as non-violent as I am. But we contemplated the imprisonment of the most innocent. If I may be allowed that claim, it is clear that I should not be followed to prison by anybody at all. My caution against further courting of imprisonment does not mean that we are now to shirk imprisonment. If the Government will take away every non-violent non-co-operator, I should welcome it. Only it should not be because of our civil disobedience, defensive or aggressive. Nor will the country fret over those who are in jail. It will do them and the country good to serve the full term of their imprisonment. They can be fitly discharged before their time only by an act of the swaraj parliament. I entertain an absolute conviction that universal adoption of khaddar is swaraj."

The trial began on Saturday, March 18, before Mr. C. N. Broomfield, I.C.S., District and Sessions Judge, Ahmedabad. Sir J. T. Strangman, the advocate-general, conducted the prosecution, while the accused, Gandhi and Banker, were undefended. The judge said that there was a slight mistake in the charges framed, which he corrected. The charges were read out, the offences being in three articles in *Young India*, namely, "Tampering with Loyalty," "The Puzzle and its Solution" and "Shaking the Manes."

The judge said that the law required that the charge should not only be read out but explained. In this case, it would not be necessary for him to say much by way of explanation. The charge in each case was that of bringing or attempting to bring into hatred or contempt or exciting or attempting to excite disaffection towards His Majesty's Government by law in British India. Both the accused were charged with three offences under section 124-A, contained in the articles read out, written by Gandhi and printed by Banker. The charges having been read out, the judge called upon the accused to plead to the charges. He asked Gandhi whether he pleaded guilty or claimed to be tried.

Gandhi said: "I plead guilty to all the charges. I observe that the King's name has been omitted from the charges and it has been properly omitted."

The judge asked Banker the same question and he too readily pleaded guilty.

The judge wished to give his verdict immediately after Gandhi had pleaded guilty, but Sir Strangman insisted that the procedure should be carried out in full. The advocate-general requested the judge to take into account "the occurrences in Bombay, Malabar and Chauri Chaura, leading to rioting and murder". He admitted, indeed, that "in these articles you find that non-violence is insisted upon as an item of the campaign and of the creed," but he added "of what value is it to insist on non-violence, if incessantly you preach disaffection towards the Government and hold it up as a treacherous Government, and if you openly and deliberately seek to instigate others to overthrow it?" These were the circumstances which he asked the judge to take into account in passing sentence on the accused.

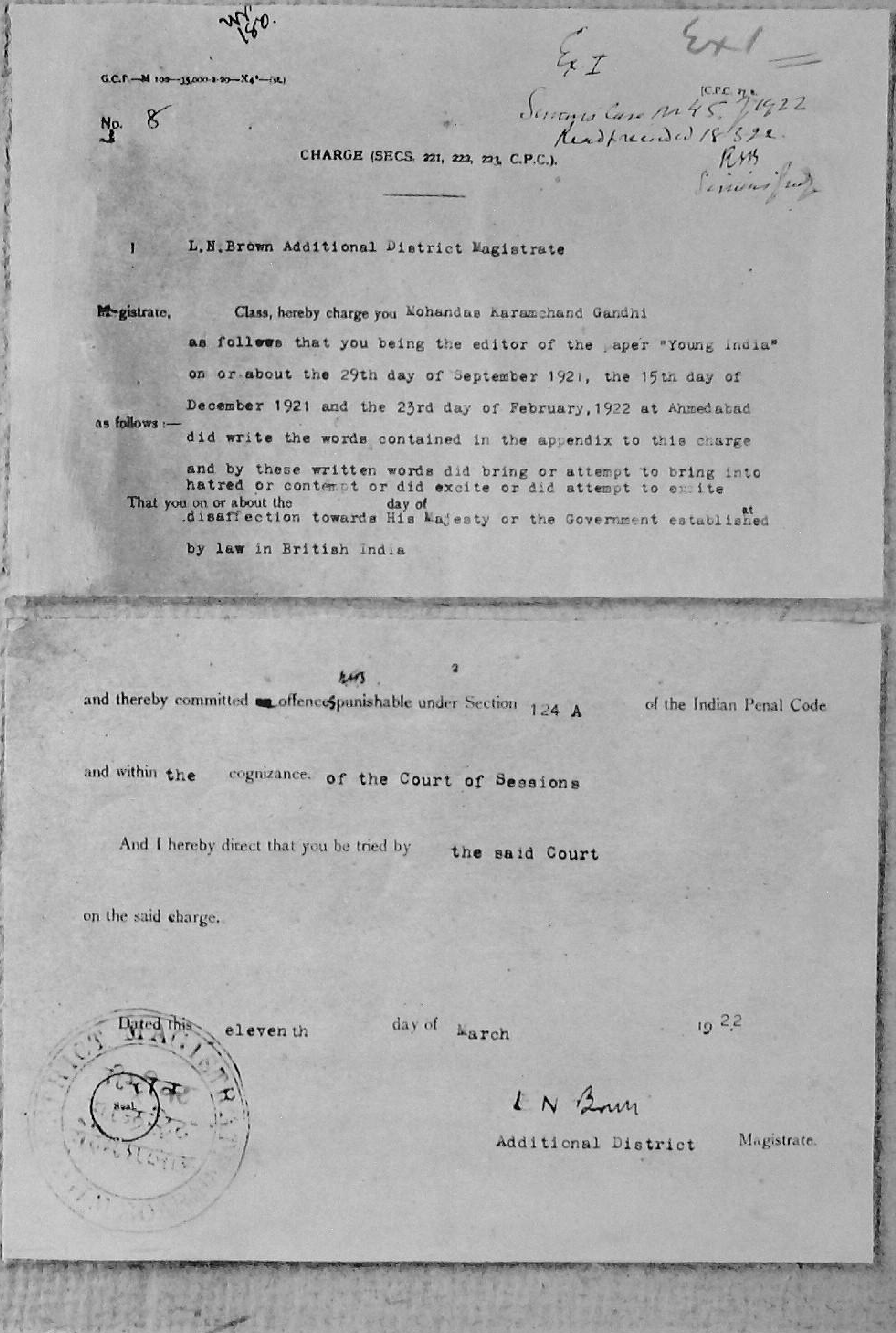
As regards Banker, the second accused, the offence was lesser. He did the publication but did not write. Sir Strangman's instructions were that Banker was a man of means and he requested the court to impose a substantial fine in addition to such term of imprisonment as might be inflicted upon.

Court: Mr. Gandhi, do you wish to make any statement on the question of sentence?

Gandhi: I would like to make a statement.

Court: Could you give me in writing to put it on record?

Gandhi: I shall give it as soon as I finish it.



G.C.P.—M 109—35,000-2-20—X4'—(3L)

No. 8

CHARGE (SECS. 221, 222, 223, C.P.C.).

I L.N.Brown Additional District Magistrate

Magistrate, Class, hereby charge you Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi as follows that you being the editor of the paper "Young India" on or about the 29th day of September 1921, the 15th day of December 1921 and the 23rd day of February, 1922 at Ahmedabad did write the words contained in the appendix to this charge and by these written words did bring or attempt to bring into hatred or contempt or did excite or did attempt to excite disaffection towards His Majesty or the Government established by law in British India

and thereby committed offences punishable under Section 124 A of the Indian Penal Code

and within the cognizance of the Court of Sessions

And I hereby direct that you be tried by the said Court

on the said charge.

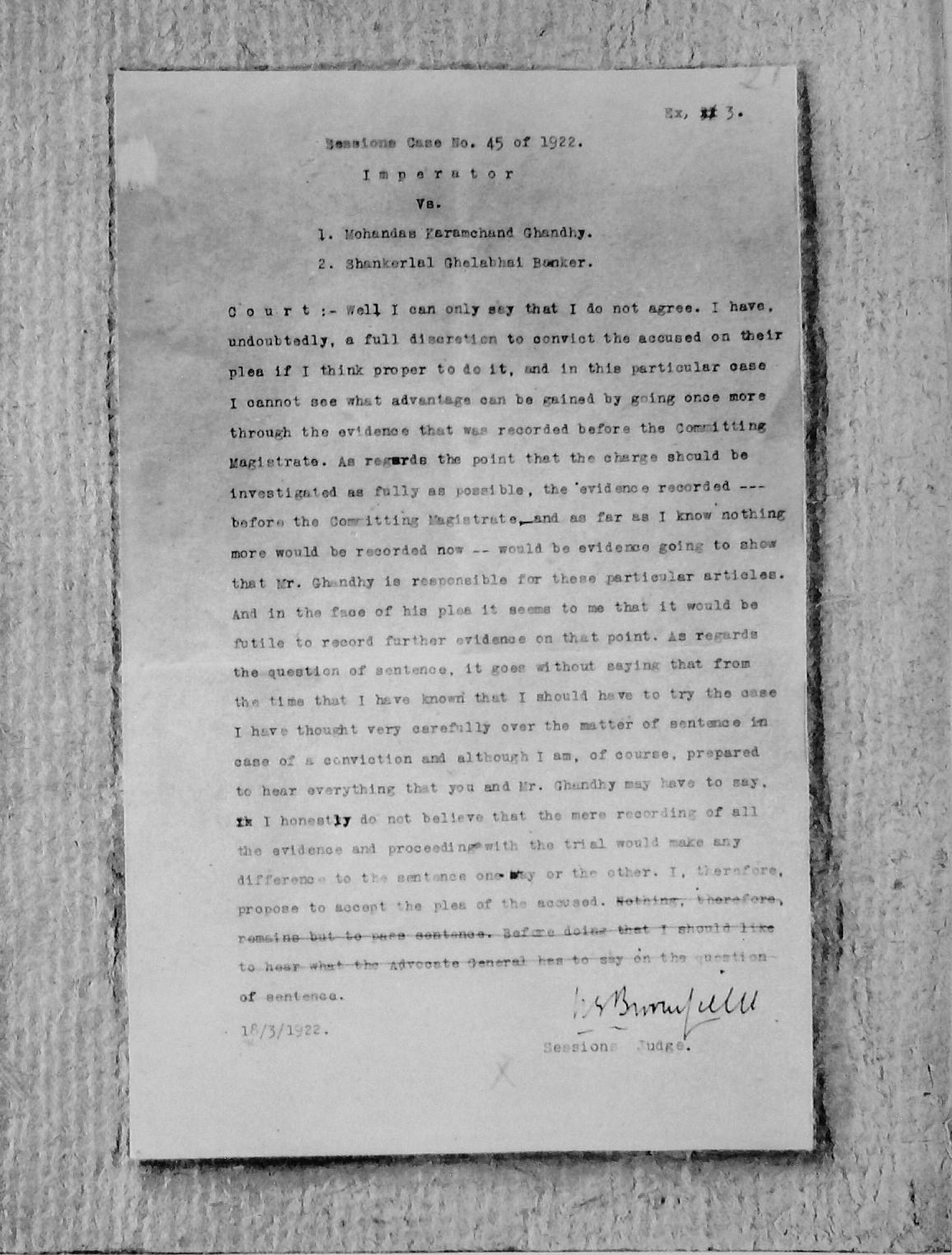
Dated this eleventh day of March 1922

L N Brown

Additional District Magistrate.

*Courtesy: Sessiens Judge, Ahmedabad*

Charge sheet against Gandhi, Sessions Court, Ahmedabad, March 1922



Ex, 3.

Sessions Case No. 45 of 1922.

Imperator

Vs.

1. Mohandas Karamchand Ghandhy.

2. Shankerlal Ghelabhai Banker.

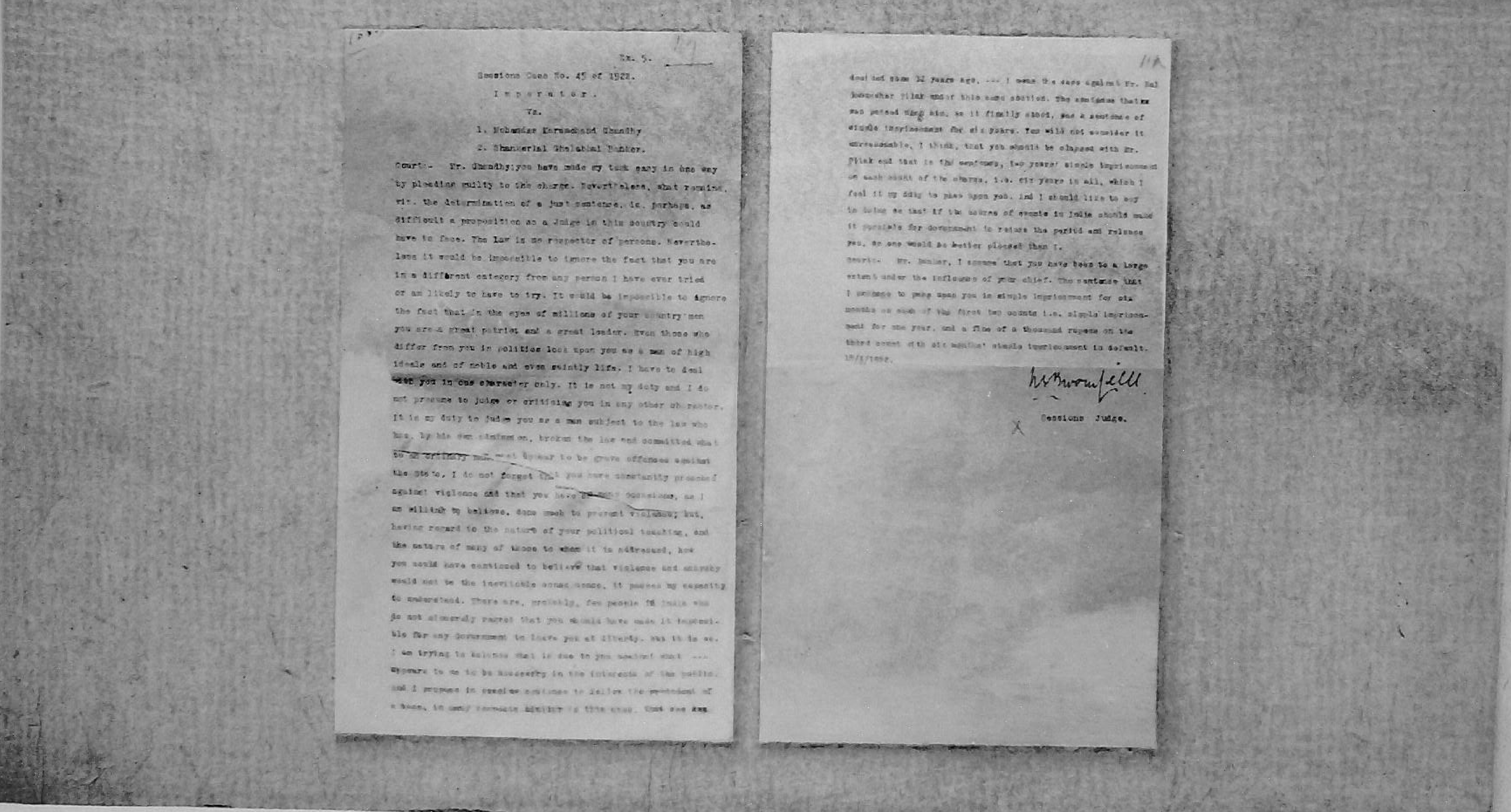
C o u r t :- Well I can only say that I do not agree. I have, undoubtedly, a full discretion to convict the accused on their plea if I think proper to do it, and in this particular case I cannot see what advantage can be gained by going once more through the evidence that was recorded before the Committing Magistrate. As regards the point that the charge should be investigated as fully as possible, the evidence recorded --- before the Committing Magistrate, and as far as I know nothing more would be recorded now -- would be evidence going to show that Mr. Ghandhy is responsible for these particular articles. And in the face of his plea it seems to me that it would be futile to record further evidence on that point. As regards the question of sentence, it goes without saying that from the time that I have known that I should have to try the case I have thought very carefully over the matter of sentence in case of a conviction and although I am, of course, prepared to hear everything that you and Mr. Ghandhy may have to say, I honestly do not believe that the mere recording of all the evidence and proceeding with the trial would make any difference to the sentence one way or the other. I, therefore, propose to accept the plea of the accused. ~~Nothing, therefore, remains but to pass sentence. Before doing that I should like to hear what the Advocate General has to say on the question~~ of sentence.

18/3/1922.

Sessions Judge.

Courtesy : Sessions Judge, Ahmedabad

A document on the procedure of the historic trial of Gandhi, March 1922



Ex. 5.

Sessions Case No. 45 of 1922.

I m p e r a t o r .

Vs.

1. Mohandas Karamchand Ghandhy

2. Shankerlal Ghelabhai Banker.

Court:- Mr. Ghandhy: you have made my task easy in one way by pleading guilty to the charge. Nevertheless, what remains, viz. the determination of a just sentence, is, perhaps, as difficult a proposition as a Judge in this country could have to face. The law is no respecter of persons. Nevertheless it would be impossible to ignore the fact that you are in a different category from any person I have ever tried or am likely to have to try. It would be impossible to ignore the fact that in the eyes of millions of your countrymen you are a great patriot and a great leader. Even those who differ from you in politics look upon you as a man of high ideals and of noble and even saintly life. I have to deal with you in one character only. It is not my duty and I do not presume to judge or criticise you in any other character. It is my duty to judge you as a man subject to the law who has, by his own admission, broken the law and committed what to an ordinary man must appear to be grave offences against the State. I do not forget that you have constantly preached against violence and that you have on many occasions, as I am willing to believe, done much to prevent violence; but, having regard to the nature of your political teaching, and the nature of many of those to whom it is addressed, how you could have continued to believe that violence and anarchy would not be the inevitable consequence, it passes my capacity to understand. There are, probably, few people in India who do not sincerely regret that you should have made it impossible for any Government to leave you at liberty. But it is so. I am trying to balance what is due to you against what ... appears to me to be necessary in the interests of the public, and I propose in passing sentence to follow the precedent of a case, in many respects similar to this case, that was [illegible]

decided some 12 years ago. --- I mean the case against Mr. Bal Gangadhar Tilak under this same section. The sentence that was passed upon him, as it finally stood, was a sentence of simple imprisonment for six years. You will not consider it unreasonable, I think, that you should be classed with Mr. Tilak and that is the sentence, two years' simple imprisonment on each count of the charge, i.e. six years in all, which I feel it my duty to pass upon you. And I should like to say in doing so that if the course of events in India should make it possible for Government to reduce the period and release you, no one would be better pleased than I.

Court:- Mr. Banker, I assume that you have been to a large extent under the influence of your chief. The sentence that I propose to pass upon you is simple imprisonment for six months on each of the first two counts i.e. simple imprisonment for one year, and a fine of a thousand rupees on the third count with six months' simple imprisonment in default.

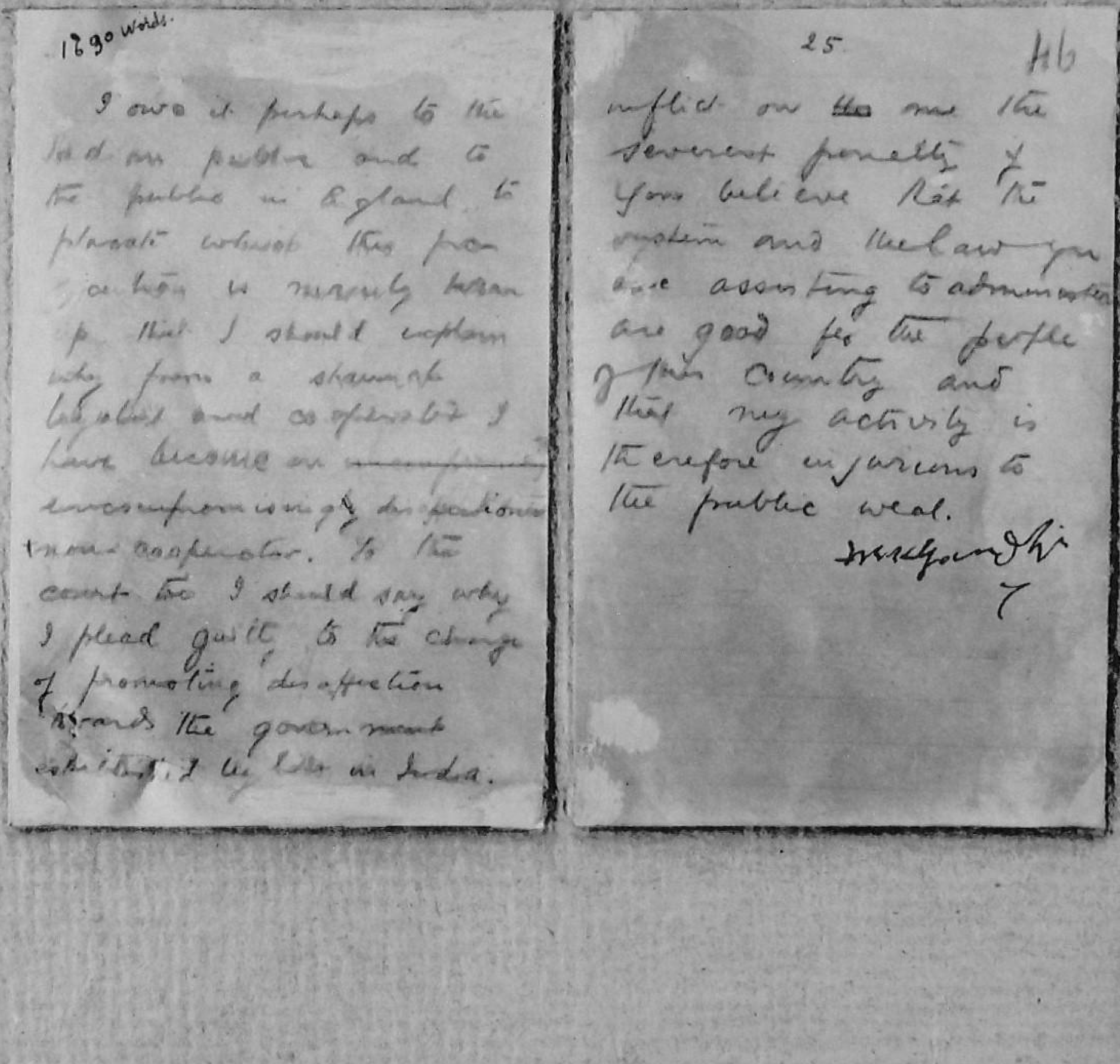
18/3/1922.

[illegible signature]

Sessions Judge.

Broomfield's historic judgement in the case against Gandhi, March 18, 1922

Courtesy : Sessions Judge, Ahmedabad


1890 words.

I owe it perhaps to the Indian public and to the public in England, to placate which this prosecution is mainly taken up, that I should explain why from a staunch loyalist and co-operator I have become an uncompromising disaffectionist and non-co-operator. To the court too I should say why I plead guilty to the charge of promoting disaffection towards the government established by law in India.

25

46

inflict on ~~the~~ me the severest penalty if you believe that the system and the law you are assisting to administer are good for the people of this country and that my activity is therefore injurious to the public weal.

M. K. Gandhi

7

Courtesy: Sessions Judge, Ahmedabad

The first and last page from Gandhi's statement in the Sessions Court, Ahmedabad, March 1922

Before reading his statement, Gandhi spoke a few words as introductory remarks to the written statement: "Before I read this statement I would like to state that I entirely endorse the learned advocate-general's remarks in connection with my humble self. I think that he was entirely fair to me in all the statements that he has made, because it is very true and I have no desire whatsoever to conceal from this court the fact that to preach disaffection towards the existing system of Government has become almost a passion with me, and the advocate-general is entirely in the right when he says that my preaching of disaffection did not commence with my connection with *Young India* but that it commenced much earlier, and in the statement that I am about to read, it will be my painful duty to admit before this court that it commenced much earlier than the period stated by the advocate-general. It is a painful duty with me but I have to discharge that duty knowing the responsibility that rests upon my shoulders, and I wish to endorse all the blame that the learned advocate-general has thrown on my shoulders in connection with the Bombay occurrences, Madras occurrences and the Chauri Chaura occurrences. Thinking over these things deeply and sleeping over them night after night, it is impossible for me to dissociate myself from the diabolical crimes of Chauri Chaura or the mad outrages of Bombay. He is quite right when he says, that as a man of responsibility, a man having received a fair share of education, having had a fair share of experience of this world, I should have known the consequences of every one of my acts. I know them. I knew that I was playing with fire. I ran the risk and if I was set free I would still do the same. I have felt it this morning that I would have failed in my duty, if I did not say what I said here just now.

"I wanted to avoid violence. Non-violence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed. But I had to make my choice. I had either to submit to a system which I considered had done an irreparable harm to my country, or incur the risk of the mad fury of my people bursting forth when they understood the truth from my lips. I know that my people have sometimes gone mad. I am deeply sorry for it and I am, therefore, here to submit not to a light penalty but to the highest penalty. I do not ask for mercy. I do not plead any extenuating act. I am here, therefore, to invite and cheerfully submit to the highest penalty that can be

inflicted upon me for what in law is a deliberate crime, and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen. The only course open to you, the judge, is, as I am going to say in my statement, either to resign your post, or inflict on me the severest penalty if you believe that the system and law you are assisting to administer are good for the people. I do not expect that kind of conversion. But by the time I have finished with my statement you will have a glimpse of what is raging within my breast to run this maddest risk which a sane man can run."

He then read out the written statement: "I owe it perhaps to the Indian public and to the public in England, to placate which this prosecution is mainly taken up, that I should explain why from a staunch loyalist and co-operator, I have become an uncompromising disaffectionist and non-co-operator. To the court too I should say why I plead guilty to the charge of promoting disaffection towards the Government established by law in India.

"My public life began in 1893 in South Africa in troubled weather. My first contact with British authority in that country was not of a happy character. I discovered that as a man and an Indian, I had no rights. More correctly I discovered that I had no rights as a man because I was an Indian.

"But I was not baffled. I thought that this treatment of Indians was an excrescence upon a system that was intrinsically and mainly good. I gave the Government my voluntary and hearty co-operation, criticizing it freely where I felt it was faulty but never wishing its destruction.

" Consequently when the existence of the empire was threatened in 1899 by the Boar challenge, I offered my services to it, raised a volunteer ambulance corps and served at several actions that took place for the relief of Ladysmith. Similarly in 1906, at the time of the Zulu revolt, I raised a stretcher-bearer party and served till the end of the 'rebellion'. On both the occasions I received medals and was even mentioned in despatches. For my work in South Africa I was given by Lord Hardinge a Kaisar-i-Hind gold medal. When the war broke out in 1914 between England and Germany, I raised a volunteer ambulance corps in London, consisting of the then resident Indians in London, chiefly students. Its work was acknowledged by the authorities to be valuable. Lastly, in India when a special appeal was made at the War Conference in Delhi in 1918

by Lord Chelmsford for recruits, I struggled at the cost of my health to raise a corps in Kheda, and the response was being made when the hostilities ceased and orders were received that no more recruits were wanted. In all these efforts at service, I was actuated by the belief that it was possible by such services to gain a status of full equality in the empire for my countrymen.

"The first shock came in the shape of the Rowlatt Act—a law designed to rob the people of all real freedom. I felt called upon to lead an intensive agitation against it. Then followed the Punjab horrors beginning with the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh and culminating in crawling orders, public floggings and other indescribable humiliations. I discovered too that the plighted word of the Prime Minister to the Musalmans of India regarding the integrity of Turkey and the holy places of Islam was not likely to be fulfilled. But in spite of the forebodings and the grave warnings of friends, at the Amritsar Congress in 1919, I fought for co-operation and working the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, hoping that the Prime Minister would redeem his promise to the Indian Musalmans, that the Punjab wound would be healed, and that the reforms, inadequate and unsatisfactory though they were, marked a new era of hope in the life of India.

"But all that hope was shattered. The Khilafat promise was not to be redeemed. The Punjab crime was whitewashed and most culprits went not only unpunished but remained in service, and some continued to draw pensions from the Indian revenue and in some cases were even rewarded. I saw too that not only did the reforms not mark a change of heart, but they were only a method of further draining India of her wealth and of prolonging her servitude.

"I came reluctantly to the conclusion that the British connection had made India more helpless than she ever was before, politically and economically. A disarmed India has no power of resistance against any aggressor if she wanted to engage in an armed conflict with him. So much is this the case that some of our best men consider that India must take generations, before she can achieve dominion status. She has become so poor that she has little power of resisting famines. Before the British advent India spun and wove in her millions of cottages, just the supplement she needed for adding to her meagre agricultural resources. This cottage industry, so vital for India's existence, has been ruined by incredibly heartless and

inhuman processes as described by English witnesses. Little do town dwellers know how the semi-starved masses of India are slowly sinking to lifelessness. Little do they know that their miserable comfort represents the brokerage they get for their work they do for the foreign exploiter, that the profits and the brokerage are sucked from the masses. Little do they realize that the Government established by law in British India is carried on for this exploitation of the masses. No sophistry, no jugglery in figures, can explain away the evidence that the skeletons in many villages present to the naked eye. I have no doubt whatsoever that both England and the town dwellers of India will have to answer, if there is a God above, for this crime against humanity, which is perhaps unequalled in history. The law itself in this country has been used to serve the foreign exploiter. My unbiased examination of the Punjab Martial Law cases has led me to believe that at least ninety-five per cent of convictions were wholly bad. My experience of political cases in India leads me to the conclusion, in nine out of every ten, the condemned men were totally innocent. Their crime consisted in the love of their country. In ninety-nine cases out of hundred, justice has been denied to Indians as against Europeans in the courts of India. This is not an exaggerated picture. It is the experience of almost every Indian who has had anything to do with such cases. In my opinion, the administration of the law is thus prostituted, consciously or unconsciously, for the benefit of the exploiter.

"The greater misfortune is that the Englishmen and their Indian associates in the administration of the country do not know that they are engaged in the crime I have attempted to describe. I am satisfied that many Englishmen and Indian officials honestly believe that they are administering one of the best systems devised in the world, and that India is making steady, though, slow progress. They do not know, a subtle but effective system of terrorism and an organized display of force on the one hand, and the deprivation of all powers of retaliation or self-defence on the other, have emasculated the people and induced in them the habit of simulation. This awful habit has added to the ignorance and the self-deception of the administrators. Section 124-A, under which I am happily charged, is perhaps the prince among the political sections of the Indian Penal Code designed to suppress the liberty of the citizen. Affection cannot be manufactured or regulated by law. If one has no affection for a person or

system, one should be free to give the fullest expression to his disaffection, so long as he does not contemplate, promote, or incite to violence. But the section under which Mr. Banker and I are charged is one under which mere promotion of disaffection is a crime. I have studied some of the cases tried under it; I know that some of the most loved of India's patriots have been convicted under it. I consider it a privilege, therefore, to be charged under that section. I have endeavoured to give in their briefest outline the reasons for my disaffection. I have no personal ill will against any single administrator, much less can I have any disaffection towards the King's person. But I hold it to be a virtue to be disaffected towards a Government which in its totality has done more harm to India than any previous system. India is less manly under the British rule than she ever was before. Holding such a belief, I consider it to be a sin to have affection for the system. And it has been a precious privilege for me to be able to write what I have in the various articles tendered in evidence against me.

"In fact, I believe that I have rendered a service to India and England by showing in non-co-operation the way out of the unnatural state in which both are living. In my opinion, non-co-operation with evil is as much a duty as is co-operation with good. But in the past, non-co-operation has been deliberately expressed in violence to the evil-doer. I am endeavouring to show to my countrymen that violent non-co-operation only multiplies evil, and that as evil can only be sustained by violence, withdrawal of support of evil requires complete abstention from violence. Non-violence implies voluntary submission to the penalty for non-co-operation with evil. I am here, therefore, to invite and submit cheerfully to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is deliberate crime, and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen. The only course open to you, the judge and the assessors, is either to resign your posts and thus dissociate yourselves from evil, if you feel that the law you are called upon to administer is an evil, and that in reality I am innocent, or to inflict on me the severest penalty, if you believe that the system and the law you are assisting to administer are good for the people of this country, and that my activity is, therefore, injurious to the common weal."

Then came the turn of Banker who stated: "I want to say that I had the privilege of printing these articles and I plead guilty to the charge. I have got nothing to say as regards the sentence."

The judge, Mr. Broomfield, now gave his verdict:

"Mr. Gandhi, you have made my task easy in one way by pleading guilty to the charge. Nevertheless, what remains, namely, the determination of a just sentence, is perhaps as difficult a proposition as a judge in this country could have to face. The law is no respector of persons. Nevertheless it will be impossible to ignore the fact that you are in a different category from any person I have ever tried or am likely to have to try. It would be impossible to ignore the fact that in the eyes of millions of your countrymen, you are a great patriot and a great leader. Even those who differ from you in politics look upon you as a man of high ideals and of noble and of even saintly life. I have to deal with you in one character only. It is not my duty and I do not presume to judge or criticize you in any other character. It is my duty to judge you as a man subject to the law, who by his own admission has broken the law and committed what to an ordinary man must appear to be grave offence against the state. I do not forget that you have constantly preached against violence, and that you have on many occasions, as I am willing to believe, done much to prevent violence. But having regard to the nature of your political teaching, and the nature of many of those to whom it was addressed, how you could have continued to believe that violence and anarchy would not be the inevitable consequence, it passes my capacity to understand.

"There are probably few people in India who do not sincerely regret that you should have made it impossible for any government to leave you at liberty. But it is so. I am trying to balance what is due to you against what appears to me to be necessary, in the interest of the public, and I propose in passing sentence to follow the precedent of a case in many respects similar to this case, that was decided some twelve years ago, I mean the case against Mr. Bal Gangadhar Tilak under the same section. The sentence that was passed upon him, as it finally stood, was a sentence of simple imprisonment for six years. You will not consider it unreasonable, I think, that you should be classed with Mr. Tilak, that is a sentence of two years' simple imprisonment on each count of the charge, that is, six years in all, which I feel it my duty to pass upon you. And I should like to say in doing so, that if the course of events in India should make it possible for the Government to reduce the period and release you, no one will be better pleased than I."

The judge then turned to Banker: "I assume you have been to a large extent under the influence of your chief. The sentence that I propose to pass upon you is simple imprisonment for six months on each of the first two counts, that is to say, simple imprisonment for one year and a fine of a thousand rupees on the third count, with six months' simple imprisonment in default."

Gandhi did not allow the judge to outdo him in courtesy. He said : "I would say one word. Since you have done me the honour of recalling the trial of Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, I just want to say that I consider it to be the proudest privilege and honour to be associated with his name. So far as the sentence itself is concerned, I certainly consider that it is as light as any judge would inflict on me; and so far as the whole proceedings are concerned, I must say that I could not have expected greater courtesy."

The trial lasted only hundred minutes. Inspired by the historic scene Mrs. Naidu, who was present at the trial, wrote:

"A convict and a criminal in the eyes of the law! Nevertheless, the entire court rose in an act of spontaneous homage when Mahatma Gandhi entered—a frail, serene, indomitable figure in a coarse and scanty loin-cloth, accompanied by his devoted disciple and fellow prisoner, Shankarlal Banker.

" 'So you are seated near me to give me your support in case I break down,' he jested, with that happy laugh of his which seems to hold all the undimmed radiance of the world's childhood in its depths. And looking round at the hosts of familiar faces of men and women who had travelled far to offer him a token of their love, he added, 'This is like a family gathering and not a law court.'

"A thrill of mingled fear, pride, hope and anguish ran through the crowded hall when the judge took his seat—an admirable judge deserving of our praise, alike for his brave and resolute sense of duty, his flawless courtesy, his just perception of a unique occasion and his fine tribute to a unique personality.

"The strange trial proceeded and so I listened to the immortal words that flowed with prophetic fervour from the lips of my beloved master. My thoughts sped across the centuries to a different land and different age, when a similar drama was enacted and another divine and gentle teacher was crucified, for spreading a kindred gospel with a kindred courage. I realized now that the lowly Jesus of Nazareth, cradled in a manger, furnished the only parallel in history to this

invincible apostle of Indian liberty who loved humanity with surpassing compassion, and to use his own beautiful phrase, 'approached the poor with the mind of the poor'.

"The most epic event of modern times ended quickly. The pent-up emotion of the people burst in a storm of sorrow as a long, slow procession moved towards him in a mournful pilgrimage of farewell, clinging to the hands that had toiled so incessantly, bowing over the feet that had journeyed so continuously in the service of his country. In the midst of all this poignant scene of many-voiced and myriad-hearted grief he stood, untroubled, in all his transcendent simplicity, the embodied symbol of the Indian nation—its living sacrifice and sacrament in one.

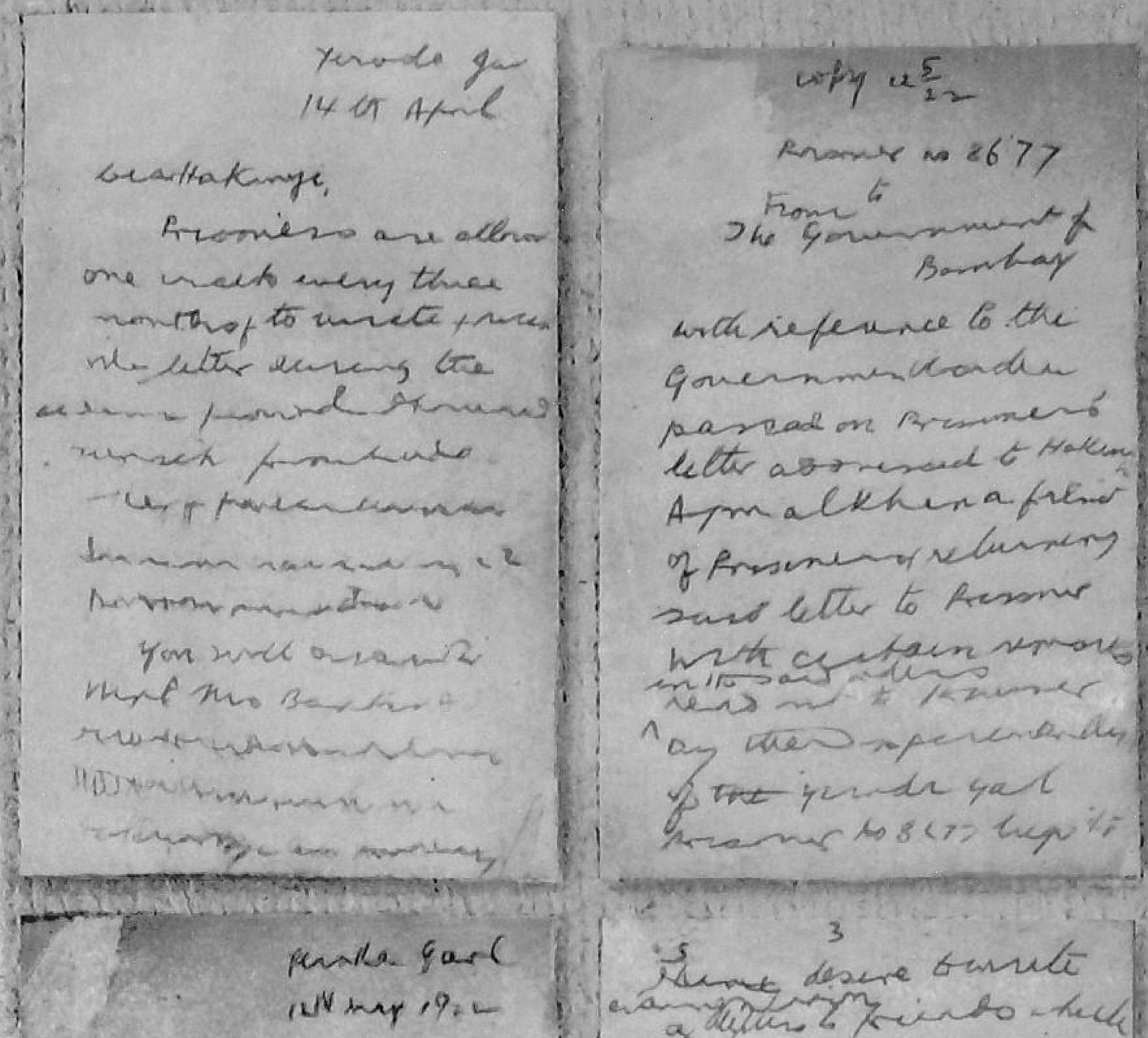
"They might take the Mahatma to the utmost ends of the earth, but his destination remains unchanged in the hearts of his people who are both the heirs and the stewards of his matchless dreams and his matchless deeds."

*Courtesy : Home Department, Government of Bombay*

Gandhi's cell in the Sabarmati Prison, 1922

*Courtesy : Home Department, Government of Bombay*

Gandhi's yard in the Sabarmati Prison, 1922
Gandhi's barrack in the Yeravda Central Prison, Poona, 1922-24



Yeravda Jail
14th April

Dear Hakimji,

Prisoners are allowed one visit every three months & to write & receive one letter during the same period. [illegible]

You will [illegible] Mrs Besant [illegible]

[illegible]

Copy 12-5-22

Prisoner no 8677
to
From
The Government of
Bombay

with reference to the Government orders passed on Prisoner's letter addressed to Hakim Ajmal Khan a friend of prisoner & returning said letter to prisoner with certain remarks [illegible] by the superintendent of the Yeravda Jail Prisoner no 8677 begs to

Yeravda Jail
12th May 1922

Dear Hakimji,
I wrote to you as required a long letter giving you full information about myself. It contained messages among others to [illegible] The Government have just passed orders refusing to send the letter unless I would remove material parts of it. They have given grounds for their decision [illegible]

3

[illegible] desire to write [illegible] of letters to friends which then become of doubtful value. Unless therefore the Government revise their decision this information must be my first & last from the Jail to you or other friends.
Hoping you are keeping well

Yours Sincerely
M K Gandhi
No 8677

Hakimjee Ajmal Khan
Delhi

*Courtesy : Girdhari Kripalani*

A page from Gandhi's letter to Hakim Ajmal Khan, Congress President, written from Yeravda Jail, April 14, 1922
A copy made by Gandhi of the Government Order, May 12, 1922, disallowing Gandhi's letter to Ajmal Khan
Gandhi's letter, dated May 12, 1922, to Hakim Ajmal Khan, intimating him of the Government Order

Inner Temple.

At a Parliament holden

Friday, 10th day of November 1922.

WHEREAS at a Bench Table holden on the 7th day of November 1922 the Treasurer having reported that he had received a certified copy of the conviction and sentence to six years' imprisonment of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi a Barrister of this Inn at the Court of the Sessions Judge, Ahmedabad, India on the 18th of March 1922 for sedition. It was Ordered - That Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi having been convicted by a competent Tribunal of an offence which in the opinion of the Bench disqualifies him from continuing a Member of the Inn should have his name removed from the books. And at the same Bench Table. It was further Ordered - That at the Parilament to be holden on Friday the 10th day of November 1922 the said Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi be disbarred and his name removed from the books of this Society and that this Order be communicated to the Judges of the Supreme Court of Judicature to the other Inns of Court to the General Council of the Bar and by registered letter to the said Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi and be screened in the Hall.

It is at this Parliament Ordered-That the said Order be and the same is hereby confirmed and the said Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi is hereby disbarred and his name removed from the books of this Society.

Walter G. Wrangham,

Sub-Treasurer.

True Copy

for Superintendent.

*Courtesy: Bombay High Court*

On November 10, 1922 Gandhi was disbarred from the roll of barristers. A true copy of the document issued by Inner Temple

## *In Yeravda*

1922-1923

On March 20, 1922, at ten in the night, Gandhi and Banker were informed that they were to be removed from the Sabarmati jail to an unknown destination. At half past eleven the police superintendent escorted them to a special train which was waiting for them. They received a basket of fruit and were treated well during the journey. For reasons of religion as well as of health, the jail doctor permitted Gandhi to have the food to which he was accustomed. The deputy police superintendent, who accompanied them, was instructed to see that Gandhi had goat's milk and Banker cow's milk, on the journey. Gandhi and the party left the train at Kirkee, where a police van was standing ready. It took them to the Yeravda prison, Poona.

The chivalry which Judge Broomfield showed in the court was shortlived. The Benchers of the Inns of Court removed Gandhi from the roll of barristers. The jail manual was applied to him rigorously at Yeravda. He was subjected to a search daily, before the lock-up. Sometimes the jailor was exceptionally rude. He had nothing but his loin-cloth on and there was no occasion for the jailor to touch his person. But the jailor touched his groins and began overhauling the blankets and other things. He touched his pot with his boots. All this was proving too much for Gandhi who remonstrated with him. This resulted in improvement of the jailor's conduct to other prisoners too.

Gandhi had his first interview in April, with his son, Devadas, and Rajagopalachari. He was kept standing during the interview and the superintendent and the jailor interrupted the talk according to their discretion. As a model prisoner, he made no protest.

Gandhi had his own jail manual, which he followed and expected the civil resisters to adhere to: "Let it be remembered that we are not seeking to destroy jails as such. I fear that we shall have to maintain jails even under swaraj. It will go hard with us if we let the

real criminals understand that they will be set free or be very much better treated, when swaraj is established. Even in reformatories by which I would like to replace every jail under swaraj, discipline will be exacted. Therefore, we really retard the advent of swaraj if we encourage indiscipline. Indeed, the swift programme of swaraj has been conceived on the supposition that we, being a cultured people, are capable of evolving high discipline within a short time. Indeed, whilst on the one hand civil disobedience authorizes disobedience of unjust laws or unmoral laws of state which one seeks to overthrow, it requires meek and willing submission to the penalty of disobedience and its attendant hardships."

To Gandhi, a satyagrahi's resistance ceased and his obedience was resumed, as soon as he was jailed. "In confinement he claims no privilege because of the civility of his disobedience. Inside the jail by his exemplary conduct he reforms even the criminals surrounding him, he softens the hearts of the jailors and others in authority." Gandhi discouraged any stealthy breach of jail regulations. Such meek behaviour must spring from strength and not timidity. "Discomfort must not be a torture, and respect must not take the form of crawling on one's belly. And, therefore, on pain of being put in irons in solitary confinement, or of being shot, non-co-operating prisoners must decline even in the name of discipline to stand naked before the jailor, must decline in the name of discomfort to wear stinking clothes or that is unclean eat food or to undigestable and must similarly decline even in the name of respect to open out their palms or to sit in a crouching position or shout 'Sarkar Ek Hai' or 'Sarkar Salam', when a jail official is passing. And if the Government is now intent upon putting us through the fire in the jails and subject us to physical pains in order to bend us, we must respectfully decline to be humiliated."

He could write only four letters a year from the jail. His first two letters which he wrote to Kasturbai and Ajmal Khan, in April, were censored by the Governor of Bombay himself. Having been asked to delete "objectionable" portions therefrom, Gandhi would not agree to comply with and did not write any more letters.

In a letter addressed to Hakim Ajmal Khan, on April 14, Gandhi described his life and experiences in Yeravda prison:

"As I had heard from former prisoners that life in this prison was not exactly pleasant, I was prepared for all kinds of difficulties. I had

previously said to Banker that I would have to refuse food if they tried to forbid me to spin, for I had taken a vow on the Hindu new year's day to spin for at least half an hour a day, unless I were ill or travelling. I told him that he was not to get excited, if I had to adopt a hunger-strike, and that he was not to follow my example, out of a mistaken feeling of solidarity. He was thus aware of how I looked at the affair.

"Thus we were not surprised when the director announced, as we entered the prison, that we must leave our spinning wheel and the basket of fruit. I told him emphatically that we had both been allowed to spin every day in Sabarmati prison and that I must insist on spinning in accordance with my vow. That brought the reply that Yeravda was not Sabarmati.

"I also said to the director of the prison that, for reasons of health, we had been allowed to sleep in the open air at the Sabarmati prison. But here we could not hope for this favour either.

"Our first impression was thus rather unfavourable. I did not let this trouble me. Moreover, the fact, that I had practically fasted for the last two days, prevented me from being affected. Banker felt everything much more hardly. He is affected with nightmares and so he does not like to be alone at night. Besides, this was the first painful experience of Banker's life, whereas I was accustomed to the cage.

"Next morning the director appeared to ask how we were. I saw that my judgement of him, formed on a first impression, had been mistaken. In any case he had been in a flurry the night before. We did not arrive till after the prescribed time and, besides, he was unprepared for what must have seemed to him an extraordinary request. Now he understood that I did not want to keep my spinning wheel out of crankiness but, rightly or wrongly, from a religious need. When he also perceived from conversation with us that there was no question of a hunger-strike, he gave the order that we should both be allowed to have our spinning wheels again. Also, he no longer held out against the view that the food we asked for was a necessity for us. So far as I have had the opportunity for observation, physical needs are well looked after in this prison. I found both the superintendent and the head warder tactful and friendly. The first days are of no account. My relations with these two officials are as cordial as is possible between a prisoner and his warders.

"I see quite clearly, however, that our prison system is almost, if not quite, devoid of humanity. The superintendent tells me that the other prisoners are not treated differently from myself. If that is the case, then the physical needs of the prisoners are completely satisfied, but there is no consideration for human needs. The prison rules are not adapted to this.

"This may be seen, for example, from the attitude of the prison committee which consists of the administrator, a clergyman and some other persons. It happened to meet on the morning after our arrival and came to ask us as to our wishes. I pointed out to them that Banker suffered from nervousness and should for that reason sleep in my cell with the door open. I cannot describe the contempt and unfeeling indifference with which this request was treated. As the gentlemen went away, I heard one of them say disdainfully: 'Nonsense!' What do they know of Banker, his position in life and the education he has enjoyed? It was not even their task to go and see him to discover what had moved me to make this request, which seemed so natural to me. Undisturbed sleep was certainly more important for Banker than good food.

"An hour after this conversation, a warder informed Banker that he was to be transferred to another section. I felt like a mother who has been robbed of her only child. It had seemed to me a happy dispensation that Banker was arrested and sentenced along with me. While we were still at Sabarmati, I informed the authorities that I would esteem it a particular favour if they would leave Banker with me and pointed out that we could be mutually helpful to each other. I read to him from the Gita and he looked after my feeble body. Banker had lost his mother only a few months before. When I was speaking to her a few days before her death, she said to me that death would not be hard for her, now that she knew her son was under my protection. The noble woman could not imagine how completely powerless I was to prove, when it was a question of protecting her son. When Banker left me, I recommended him to the care of God, and awakened confidence in him that God would preserve His own.

"Since then he has received permission to come to me for half an hour every day to teach me carding, in which he is proficient. This takes place in the presence of a warder who has to see that we speak only of matters necessary to our occupation. At present I am trying

to induce the general inspector and the prison superintendent to allow us to read the Gita, for the few moments we are together. This request of mine is being considered.

"I had to use my ingenuity to get leave to keep seven books, five of a purely religious character, an old dictionary which I value greatly, and an Urdu manual which Maulana Abul Kalam Azad gave me. My wish was against the strict order that prisoners may only read books taken from the prison library. So I was urged to present the seven books to the library and then borrow them back again. I remarked in a friendly way to the superintendent that I would gladly do this with all my other books, but that he might as well demand my right arm as these books, which were dear to me, partly because of their contents and partly because of their importance as souvenirs. I do not know what means the superintendent had to use, in order finally, to persuade the higher authorities to let me keep the books.

"The use of a pocket-knife presents another problem. If I want to prepare my toasted bread—I cannot bear it otherwise— I must cut it into slices. I must also cut up my lemons, if I want to squeeze them. But a pocket-knife is regarded as a 'lethal weapon' which would be a danger in the hands of a prisoner. I gave the superintendent the choice of either depriving me of bread and lemons, or allowing me a knife. After a great deal of fuss, my own penknife was again placed at my disposal. But it remains in the keeping of the warder and is only handed to me, when I actually need it. Every evening it has to be given up to the head warder, who gives it back again to the convict warder in the morning.

"This species will be new to you. Convict warders are generally prisoners on a long sentence who are given warder's uniform for good conduct and entrusted with tasks which do not involve any great responsibility. They are allowed to wear warder's uniform but remain under continual supervision. One of these warders who was sentenced for murder, has to watch me during day. At night he is given an assistant whose appearance reminds me of Shaukat Ali. This last has only been the case since the general inspector gave orders that my cell door might remain open. Both warders are very harmless fellows. They do not molest me in any way, and I never permit myself to talk to them. I have to exchange a few words now and then with the warder, who watches me in the

day-time, about my desires and needs, but otherwise I have no communication as such with him.

"My cell is situated in a triangular block whose longest side—it faces west—contains eleven cells. One of my fellow prisoners quartered in the same section is an Arabic state prisoner. As he does not speak Hindustani and I unfortunately have no mastery of Arabic, our speech is limited to a mutual 'good morning'. The base of the triangle is formed by a stout wall and the shortest side by a barbed-wire fence with a door which opens on to a spacious square. The triangular space within the central block was formerly divided in two by a chalk line I was forbidden to cross. Thus I had a space of about seventy feet long at my disposal, on which I could move freely. When Mr. Khambata, an inspection official, was here recently on a visit of inspection, I drew his attention to this white line as a proof of the lack of human feeling in the orders of the prison administration. He was not in favour of this restriction and reported in this sense, with the result that the whole triangle was made free to me. It is about a hundred and forty feet long. Now my desires are set on the square on the other side of the door. But that is perhaps too human to be allowed. But since the white line has been removed, I may hope that the barbed-wire fence will also fall and I may have more freedom of movement. It is certainly a ticklish matter for the director, and he will need time for reflection.

"I am in solitary confinement and may not speak to any one. Some of the Dharwad prisoners are in the same jail with me. I do not see any of them, though I do not see how my society could do them any harm. They again could not harm me. Nor would we make arrangements for our escape, nor conspire for this purpose. Besides, by acting in this way, we would do the Government the greatest favour. But if it is a question of protecting them from the infection of my dangerous ideas, the isolation has come too late. They are already infected. And there is only one thing I could do here, make them still more enthusiastic about the spinning wheel.

"What I said about my isolation is not intended as a complaint. I feel happy. My nature likes loneliness. I love quietness. And now I have an opportunity of engaging in studies that I had to neglect in the outside world.

"But not all prisoners feel like me and enjoy solitary confinement. It is as inhuman, as it is unnecessary. It could be avoided by

a proper distribution of the prisoners. But now the prisoners are arbitrarily shut up together and no director, however human, could be just to all the men and women of different sorts who are entrusted to his care, while he has not a free hand. So he merely does his best to be just to their bodies and neglects their souls.

"Hence it comes that prisons are abused for political ends and, therefore, the political prisoner is not safe from persecution even within their walls.

"I shall end the description of my life in prison with a description of the course of my day. My cell is in itself decent, clean and airy. The permission to sleep in the open air is a great blessing to me, as I am accustomed to sleeping in the open. I rise at four to pray. The inhabitants of Satyagraha Ashram will, I am sure, be glad to know that I have not ceased to say the morning prayers and sing some of the hymns which I know by heart. At six I begin my studies. I am not allowed a light. But as soon as it is light enough for reading, I start work. At seven in the evening, when it is too dark to read, I finish my day's work. At eight I betake myself to rest after the usual ashram prayer. My studies include the Koran, the Ramayana of Tulsidas, books about Christianity, exercises in Urdu and much else. I spend six hours on these literary efforts. Four hours I devote to hand-spinning and carding. To begin with, when I had only a little cotton at my disposal, I could only spin for thirty minutes. But now the administration has placed sufficient cotton at my disposal, very dirty, perhaps very good practice for a beginner in carding. I spend an hour at carding and three at spinning. Anasuyabehn and Maganlal Gandhi have sent me bobbins. I want to ask them not to send me any more for the moment. On the other hand, some fine well-cleaned cotton would be a great service, but they should not send me more than two pounds at a time. I am very much set on making my own bobbins. To my way of thinking every spinner should learn to card. I learnt it in an hour. It is more difficult to manage than spinning, but it is easier to learn.

"Spinning becomes more and more an inner need with me. Every day I come nearer to the poorest of the poor, and in them, to God. The four hours I devote to this work are more important to me than all the others. The fruits of my labour lie before my eyes. Not one impure thought haunts me in these four hours. While I read the Gita, the Koran, or the Ramayana, my thoughts fly far away. But

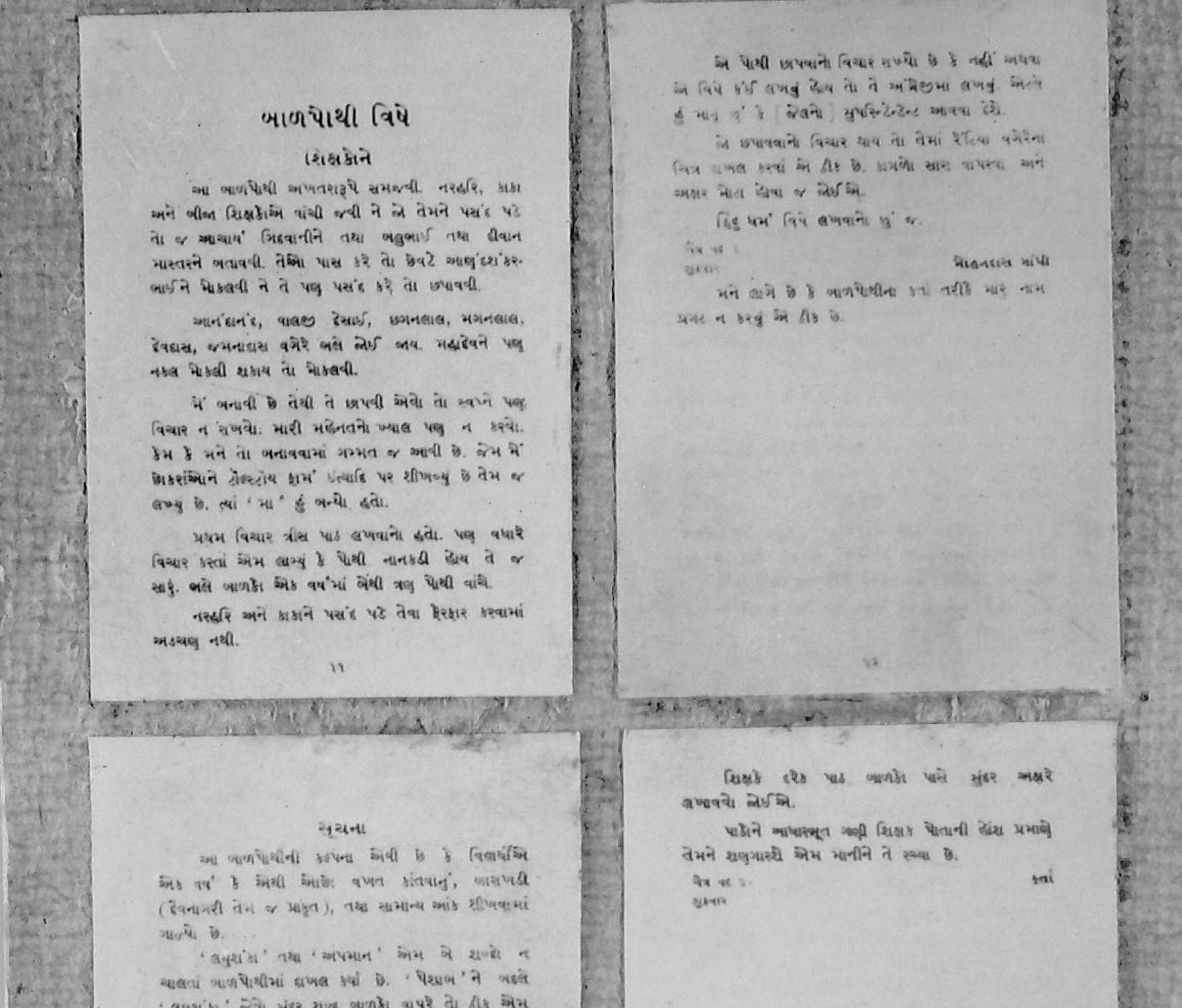
when I turn to the spinning wheel or work at the hackle, my attention is directed on a single point. The spinning wheel cannot mean so much to every one. But to me, the spinning wheel and the economic salvation of impoverished India are so much one, that spinning has for me a charm all its own. My heart is drawn backwards and forwards between the spinning wheel and books. And it is not impossible, in my next letter, I will have to tell you that I am spending even more time on spinning and carding.

"Please say to Maulana Abdul Bari, who recently informed me that he had begun to spin, that I count on his keeping pace with me in progress. His good example will cause many to make a duty of this important work. You may tell the people at the ashram that I have written the promised primer, and will send it to them, if I am allowed. I hope it will also be possible for me to write the contemplated religious primer, and also the history of our prolonged fight in South Africa.

"In order to divide the day better, I take only two meals instead of three. I feel quite well on it. With regard to food, the prison superintendent is most accommodating. For the last three days he has let me have goat's milk and butter, and I hope, in a few days, to be able to make my own *chapatis*.

"Besides two new warm blankets, a mat and two sheets have been placed at my disposal. A pillow has also arrived since. I could really do without it. Up till now I have used my books or my spare clothes as a pillow. But Rajagopalachari used all his influence to have a pillow given to me. There is also a bathroom with a lock available, which I am allowed to use every day. A special cell has been put at my disposal for work, at least while it is not required for other purposes. The sanitary arrangements have been improved.

"So my friends need not be at all anxious about me. I am as happy as a bird and I do not feel that I am accomplishing less here than outside the prison. My stay here is a good school for me and my separation from my fellow workers should prove whether our movement is an independently evolving organism, or merely the work of one individual and, therefore, something very transient. I myself have no fears. Thus I am not eager to know what is happening outside. If my prayers are sincere and come from a faithful heart, they are more useful—of this I am certain—than any fussy activity.



# બાળપોથી વિષે

## શિક્ષકોને

આ બાળપોથી અખતરારૂપે સમજવી. નરહરિ, કાકા અને બીજા શિક્ષકોએ વાંચી જવી ને એ તેમને પસંદ પડે તો જ આચાર્ય ગિદવાનીને તથા બહુભાઈ તથા દીવાન માસ્તરને બતાવવી. તેઓ પાસ કરે તો છેવટે આણંદશંકરભાઈને મોકલવી ને તે પણ પસંદ કરે તો છપાવવી.

આનંદાનંદ, વાલજી દેસાઈ, છગનલાલ, મગનલાલ, દેવદાસ, જમનાદાસ વગેરે ભલે જોઈ જાય. મહાદેવને પણ નકલ મોકલી શકાય તો મોકલવી.

મેં બનાવી છે તેથી તે છપવી એવો તો સ્વપ્ને પણ વિચાર ન રાખવો: મારી મહેનતનો ખ્યાલ પણ ન કરવો. કેમ કે મને તો બનાવવામાં ગમ્મત જ આવી છે. જેમ મેં છોકરાંઓને ટૉલ્સ્ટૉય ફાર્મ ઇત્યાદિ પર શીખવ્યું છે તેમ જ લખ્યું છે. ત્યાં 'મા' હું બન્યો હતો.

પ્રથમ વિચાર ત્રીસ પાઠ લખવાનો હતો. પણ વધારે વિચાર કરતાં એમ લાગ્યું કે પોથી નાનકડી હોય તે જ સારું. ભલે બાળકો એક વર્ષમાં બેથી ત્રણ પોથી વાંચે.

નરહરિ અને કાકાને પસંદ પડે તેવા ફેરફાર કરવામાં અડચણ નથી.

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એ પોથી છપાવવાનો વિચાર કર્યો છે કે નહીં અથવા એ વિષે કંઈ લખવું હોય તો તે અંગ્રેજીમાં લખવું. એટલે હું માનું છું કે [જેલનો] સુપરિન્ટેન્ડેન્ટ આવવા દેશે.

એ છપાવવાનો વિચાર થાય તો તેમાં રેંટિયા વગેરેના ચિત્ર દાખલ કરવાં એ ઠીક છે. કાગળો સારા વાપરવા અને અક્ષર મોટા હોવા જ જોઈએ.

હિંદુ ધર્મ વિષે લખવાનો છું જ.

ચૈત્ર વદ ૨
ગુરુવાર

મોહનદાસ ગાંધી

મને લાગે છે કે બાળપોથીના કર્તા તરીકે મારું નામ પ્રગટ ન કરવું એ ઠીક છે.

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## સૂચના

આ બાળપોથીની કલ્પના એવી છે કે વિદ્યાર્થીએ એક વર્ષ કે એથી ઓછો વખત કાંતવાનું, બારાખડી (દેવનાગરી તેમ જ પ્રાકૃત), તથા સામાન્ય આંક શીખવામાં ગાળ્યો છે.

'લઘુશંકા' તથા 'અપમાન' એમ બે શબ્દો ન ચાલતાં બાળપોથીમાં દાખલ કર્યા છે. 'પેશાબ'ને બદલે 'લઘુશંકા' જેવો સુંદર શબ્દ બાળકો વાપરે તો ઠીક એમ સમજીને તે દાખલ કર્યો છે. અપમાન કરતાં હળવો શબ્દ ન મળવાથી તે રહેવા દીધો છે.

બારમા પાઠમાં જે કંઈ અઘરા શબ્દો આવે છે તે ઇચ્છાપૂર્વક દાખલ કર્યા છે.

આ પોથી રચવામાં ધારણા એવી રાખી છે કે બાળક શીખે તેનો અમલ કરે. જેનો તેને રોજ અનુભવ ન મળે એવું કશું તેમાં નાખ્યું નથી.

માતા અને બાળક વચ્ચે સંવાદરૂપે પોથી લખી છે તેમાં કૃત્રિમતા છે, કેમ કે આજની ભારતવર્ષની માતાઓ ઘણે ભાગે બાળકને શિક્ષા આપવાનો પોતાનો ધર્મ પાળતી નથી ને તેને સારુ તૈયાર પણ નથી હોતી. હવે પછી પેઢીની માતાઓ પણ પોતાનાં બાળકો પ્રત્યેનો ધર્મ બજાવે એવી ઉમેદથી આટલી કૃત્રિમતા આદર્શરૂપે દાખલ કરી છે. બાળપોથી ત્રણથી છ માસમાં પૂરી થાય એવી કલ્પના છે.

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શિક્ષકે દરેક પાઠ બાળકો પાસે સુંદર અક્ષરે લખાવવો જોઈએ.

પાઠોને આધારભૂત ગણી શિક્ષક પોતાની ઢંગ પ્રમાણે તેમને શણગારશે એમ માનીને તે રચ્યા છે.

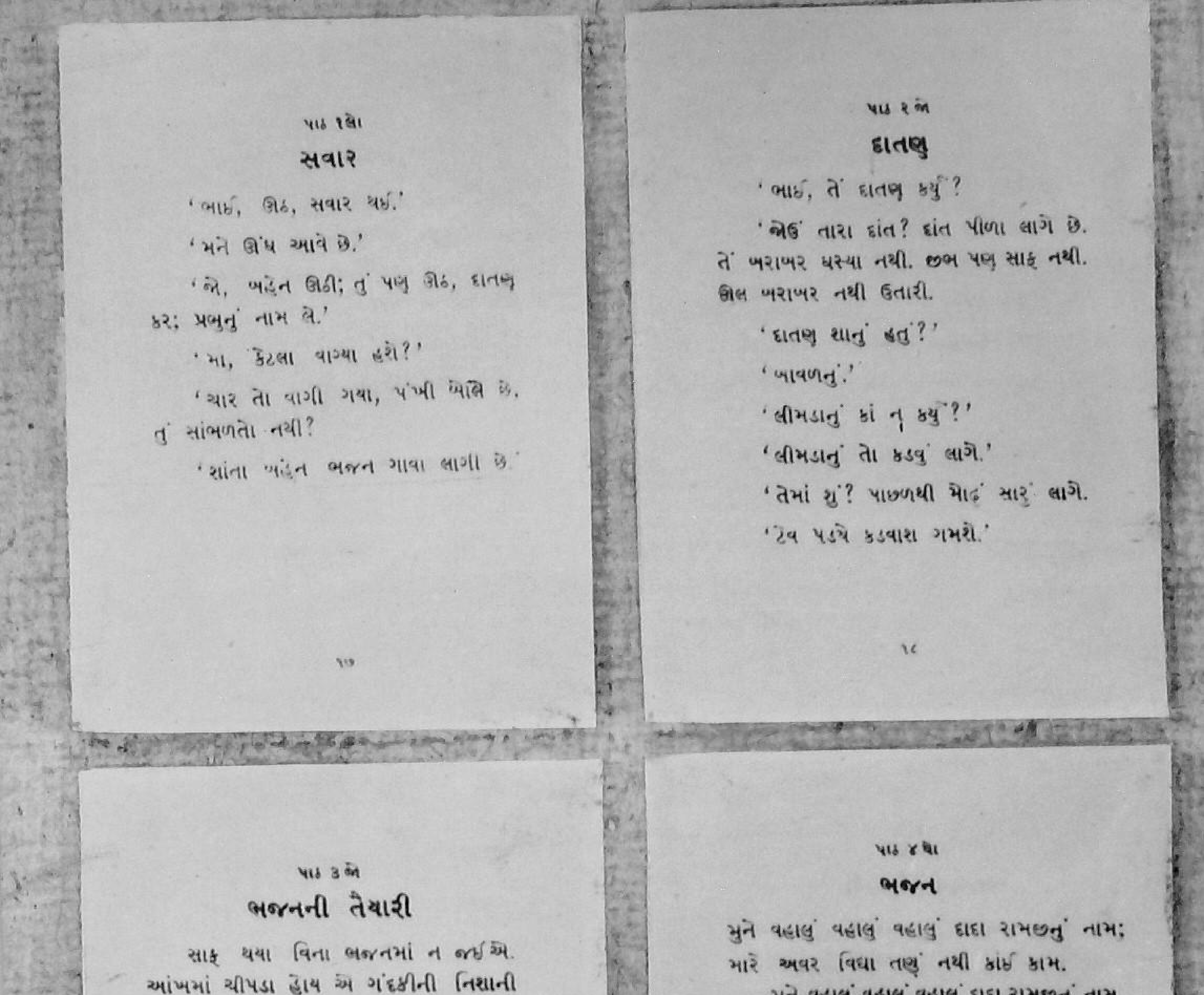
ચૈત્ર વદ [illegible]
ગુરુવાર

કર્તા

૧૪

Gujarati primer for children written by Gandhi in Yeravda Prison:

"In printing this primer good paper, bold type and suitable illustrations, *e.g.*, charkha, must be used. . . Before starting to study it, the child must know spinning, the alphabets and numerals. This primer is written in the form of a dialogue between the child and mother. I hope that the mother in India will, in future, be her child's teacher."



પાઠ ૧લો

## સવાર

'ભાઈ, ઊઠ, સવાર થઈ.'

'મને ઊંઘ આવે છે.'

'જો, બહેન ઊઠી; તું પણ ઊઠ, દાતણ કર; પ્રભુનું નામ લે.'

'મા, કેટલા વાગ્યા હશે?'

'ચાર તો વાગી ગયા, પંખી બોલે છે. તું સાંભળતો નથી?

'શાંતા બહેન ભજન ગાવા લાગી છે.'

૧૭

પાઠ ૨જો

## દાતણ

'ભાઈ, તેં દાતણ કર્યું?

'જોઉં તારા દાંત? દાંત પીળા લાગે છે. તેં બરાબર ઘસ્યા નથી. જીભ પણ સાફ નથી. ઊલ બરાબર નથી ઉતારી.

'દાતણ શાનું હતું?'

'બાવળનું.'

'લીમડાનું કાં ન કર્યું?'

'લીમડાનું તો કડવું લાગે.'

'તેમાં શું? પાછળથી મોઢું સારું લાગે.

'ટેવ પડયે કડવાશ ગમશે.'

૧૮

પાઠ ૩જો

## ભજનની તૈયારી

સાફ થયા વિના ભજનમાં ન જઈએ. આંખમાં ચીપડા હોય એ ગંદકીની નિશાની છે. પ્રભુનું ભજન કરતાં આપણે શરીર અને મન ચોખ્ખાં રાખવાં જોઈએ. પ્રાર્થનામાં પલાંઠી વાળી, હાથ જોડી, ટટ્ટાર બેસવું જોઈએ. કોઈની સાથે વાત ન કરીએ; કોઈની સામે ન જોઈએ. પ્રભુને આપણે નથી જોતા, પણ તે આપણને જુએ છે.

તું ઊંઘે છે ત્યારે પણ હું જાગતી હોવાથી તને જોઉં છું; તું મને નથી જોતો; તેમ ઈશ્વરને આપણે ન જોઈએ છતાં તે આપણને કાં ન જુએ?

૧૯

પાઠ ૪થો

## ભજન

મુને વહાલું વહાલું વહાલું દાદા રામજીનું નામ;
મારે અવર વિદ્યા તણું નથી કાંઈ કામ.
    મુને વહાલું વહાલું વહાલું દાદા રામજીનું નામ.

જુઓ રે પિતાજી આણી મુજ પર પ્રીત,
મારી પાટીમાં લખાવો રૂડાં ગોવિંદજીનાં ગીત.
    મુને વહાલું વહાલું વહાલું દાદા રામજીનું નામ.
મારે શ્રવણ શ્રીરામજીનું, રામજીનું ગાન;
મારે રામજીનું સ્મરણ, શ્રીરામજીનું ધ્યાન.
    મુને વહાલું વહાલું વહાલું દાદા રામજીનું નામ.

કાલિદાસ બસાવડનો

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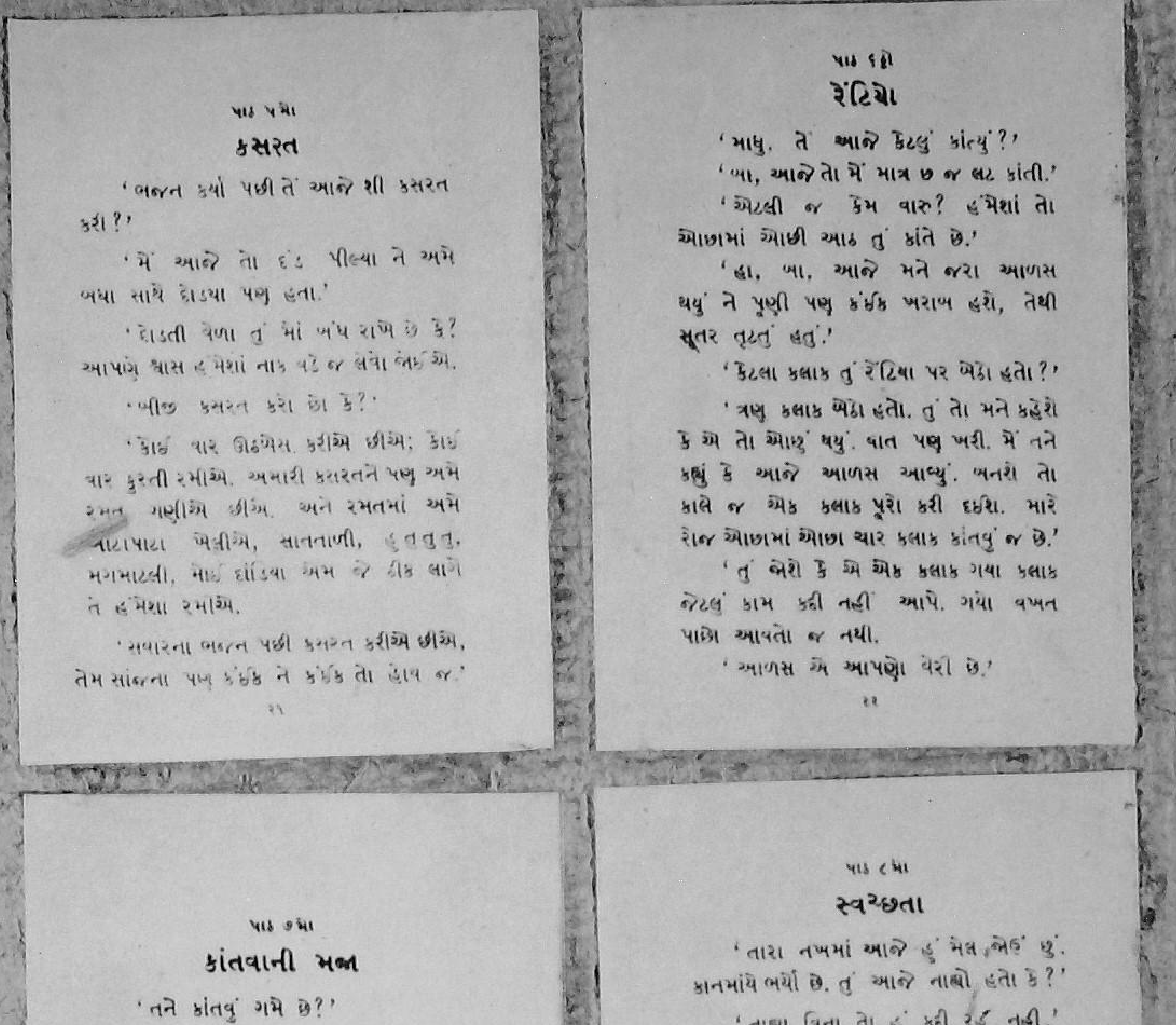
First four lessons from the primer: Early rising at four in the morning, brushing of teeth with *neem* stick and cleaning of mouth, getting ready for prayers with clean body and composed mind and chanting of prayers.



પાઠ ૫મો

## કસરત

'ભજન કર્યાં પછી તેં આજે શી કસરત કરી?'

'મેં આજે તો દંડ પીલ્યા ને અમે બધા સાથે દોડ્યા પણ હતા.'

'દોડતી વેળા તું મોં બંધ રાખે છે કે? આપણે શ્વાસ હંમેશાં નાક વડે જ લેવો જોઈએ.

'બીજી કસરત કરો છો કે?'

'કોઈ વાર ઊઠબેસ કરીએ છીએ; કોઈ વાર કુસ્તી રમીએ. અમારી કસરતને પણ અમે રમત ગણીએ છીએ. અને રમતમાં અમે આટાપાટા ખેલીએ, સાતતાળી, હુતુતુતુ, મગમાટલી, મોઈ દાંડિયા એમ જે ઠીક લાગે તે હંમેશા રમીએ.

'સવારના ભજન પછી કસરત કરીએ છીએ, તેમ સાંજના પણ કંઈક ને કંઈક તો હોય જ.'

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પાઠ ૬ઠ્ઠો

## રેંટિયો

'માધુ, તેં આજે કેટલું કાંત્યું?'

'બા, આજે તો મેં માત્ર છ જ લટ કાંતી.'

'એટલી જ કેમ વારુ? હંમેશાં તો ઓછામાં ઓછી આઠ તું કાંતે છે.'

'હા, બા, આજે મને જરા આળસ થયું ને પૂણી પણ કંઈક ખરાબ હશે, તેથી સૂતર તૂટતું હતું.'

'કેટલા કલાક તું રેંટિયા પર બેઠો હતો?'

'ત્રણ કલાક બેઠો હતો. તું તો મને કહેશે કે એ તો ઓછું થયું. વાત પણ ખરી. મેં તને કહ્યું કે આજે આળસ આવ્યું. બનશે તો કાલે જ એક કલાક પૂરો કરી દઈશ. મારે રોજ ઓછામાં ઓછા ચાર કલાક કાંતવું જ છે.'

'તું જાણે કે એ એક કલાક ગયા કલાક જેટલું કામ કદી નહીં આપે. ગયો વખત પાછો આવતો જ નથી.

'આળસ એ આપણો વેરી છે.'

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પાઠ ૭મો

## કાંતવાની મજા

'તને કાંતવું ગમે છે?'

'જ્યારે ત્રાક ઠરડાઈ ન હોય, માળ બરોબર બેસતી હોય, ચક્કર અવાજ વિના ફરે ને તાર ન તૂટે, ત્યારે તો કાંતવામાં રમવા જેટલી મજા પડે છે. જ્યારે રેંટિયો ખૂબ ચલાવું છું, ત્યારે ભંભૂટિયાના જેવો મધુર સૂર નીકળે છે, તે આનંદ આપે છે.

'વળી, મેં કાંતેલા સૂતરનાં મારાં કપડાં વણાશે એ વિચારથી પણ કાંતવામાં હોંશ આવે છે.'

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પાઠ ૮મો

## સ્વચ્છતા

'તારા નખમાં આજે હું મેલ જોઉં છું. કાનમાંયે ભર્યો છે. તું આજે નાહ્યો હતો કે?'

'નાહ્યા વિના તો હું કદી રહું નહીં.'

'નાહ્યો એટલે માથે પાણી રેડ્યું કે નદીમાં ડૂબકી મારી, એટલે થયું કે?

'નાહવું એટલે શરીરના બધા ભાગ ખૂબ સાફ કરવા. શરીર ભીનું કરીને ચોળવું જોઈએ. કાન, બગલ વગેરે ભાગોને ઘસીને મેલ કાઢવો જોઈએ. નખ તપાસવા જોઈએ. જેના નખમાં મેલ હોય તેને તેવે હાથે ખાવું કેમ ગમે?

'જેમ શરીર તેમ જ આપણાં કપડાં, બિછાનું વગેરે સ્વચ્છ હોવાં જોઈએ.

'સુઘડતા ઉદ્યમની નિશાની છે. મેલ આળસુપણાની નિશાની છે.'

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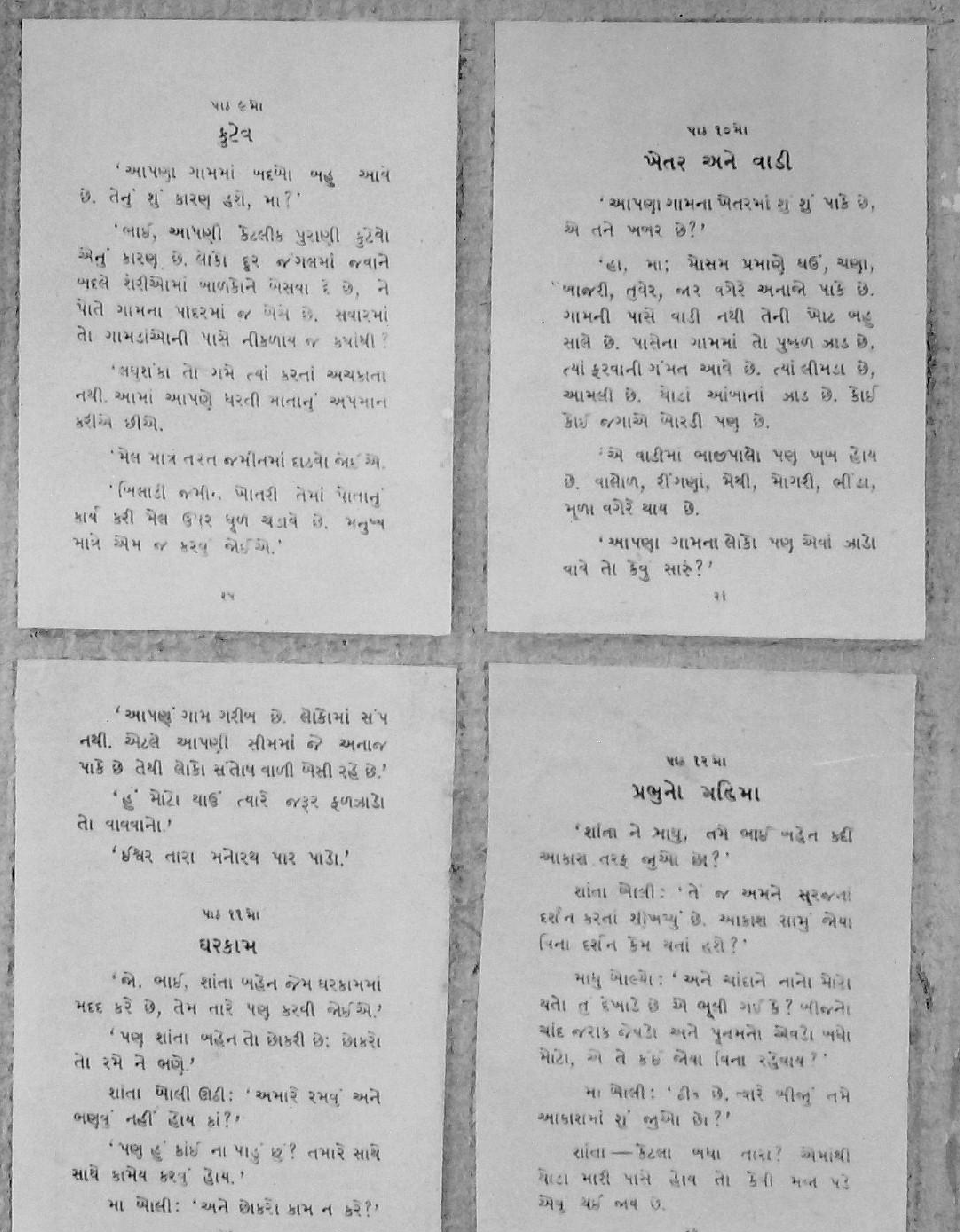
The next four lessons: After the prayers there should be bodily exercise, the breathing to be controlled through the nose only; regular spinning for four hours; the joy of spinning on a perfect wheel; proper bathing, clean clothes and clean bed.



પાઠ ૯મો

**કુટેવ**

'આપણા ગામમાં ખદખો બહુ આવે છે. તેનું શું કારણ હશે, મા?'

'ભાઈ, આપણી કેટલીક પુરાણી કુટેવો એનું કારણ છે. લોકો દૂર જંગલમાં જવાને બદલે શેરીઓમાં બાળકોને બેસવા દે છે, ને પોતે ગામના પાદરમાં જ બેસે છે. સવારમાં તો ગામડાંઓની પાસે નીકળાય જ ક્યાંથી?

'લઘુશંકા તો ગમે ત્યાં કરતાં અચકાતા નથી. આમાં આપણે ધરતી માતાનું અપમાન કરીએ છીએ.

'મેલ માત્ર તરત જમીનમાં દાટવો જોઈએ.

'બિલાડી જમીન ખોતરી તેમાં પોતાનું કાર્ય કરી મેલ ઉપર ધૂળ ચડાવે છે. મનુષ્ય માત્રે એમ જ કરવું જોઈએ.'

પાઠ ૧૦મો

**ખેતર અને વાડી**

'આપણા ગામના ખેતરમાં શું શું પાકે છે, એ તને ખબર છે?'

'હા, મા: મોસમ પ્રમાણે ઘઉં, ચણા, બાજરી, તુવેર, જાર વગેરે અનાજ પાકે છે. ગામની પાસે વાડી નથી તેની ખોટ બહુ સાલે છે. પાસેના ગામમાં તો પુષ્કળ ઝાડ છે, ત્યાં ફરવાની ગંમત આવે છે. ત્યાં લીમડા છે, આમલી છે. મોટાં આંબાનાં ઝાડ છે. કોઈ કોઈ જગાએ બોરડી પણ છે.

'એ વાડીમાં ભાજીપાલો પણ ખૂબ હોય છે. વાલોળ, રીંગણાં, મેથી, મોગરી, ભીંડા, મૂળા વગેરે થાય છે.

'આપણા ગામના લોકો પણ એવાં ઝાડો વાવે તો કેવું સારું?'

'આપણું ગામ ગરીબ છે. લોકોમાં સંપ નથી. એટલે આપણી સીમમાં જે અનાજ પાકે છે તેથી લોકો સંતોષ વાળી બેસી રહે છે.'

'હું મોટો થાઉં ત્યારે જરૂર ફળઝાડો તો વાવવાનો.'

'ઈશ્વર તારા મનોરથ પાર પાડો.'

પાઠ ૧૧મો

**ઘરકામ**

'જો, ભાઈ, શાંતા બહેન જેમ ઘરકામમાં મદદ કરે છે, તેમ તારે પણ કરવી જોઈએ.'

'પણ શાંતા બહેન તો છોકરી છે: છોકરો તો રમે ને ભણે.'

શાંતા બોલી ઊઠી: 'અમારે રમવું અને ભણવું નહીં હોય કાં?'

'પણ હું કાંઈ ના પાડું છું? તમારે સાથે સાથે કામેય કરવું હોય.'

મા બોલી: 'અને છોકરો કામ ન કરે?'

પાઠ ૧૨મો

**પ્રભુનો મહિમા**

'શાંતા ને માધુ, તમે ભાઈ બહેન કદી આકાશ તરફ જુઓ છો?'

શાંતા બોલી: 'તેં જ અમને સૂરજનાં દર્શન કરતાં શીખવ્યું છે. આકાશ સામું જોયા વિના દર્શન કેમ થતાં હશે?'

માધુ બોલ્યો: 'અને ચાંદાને નાનો મોટો થતો તું દેખાડે છે એ ભૂલી ગઈ કે? બીજનો ચાંદ જરાક જેવડો અને પૂનમનો એવડો બધો મોટો, એ તે કંઈ જોયા વિના રહેવાય?'

મા બોલી: 'ઠીક છે, ત્યારે બીજું તમે આકાશમાં શું જુઓ છો?'

શાંતા—કેટલા બધા તારા? એમાંથી થોડા મારી પાસે હોય તો કેવી મજા પડે એવું થઈ જાય છે.

*Courtesy : Navajivan Trust, Ahmedabad*

The last four lessons : Eradication of bad habits in sanitation; knowledge and enjoyment of trees etc. in the fields; help in household jobs; appreciation of nature—the sun, moon, stars, clouds, night and day.

"I am anxious on the other hand about the health of our friend Das, and have good reason to reproach his wife for not informing me how he is. I hope that Motilalji's asthma is better.

"Please try to convince my wife that it is better for her not to visit me. Devadas made a scene when he was here. He could not bear to see me standing in the superintendent's presence, when he was admitted. The proud and sensitive boy burst into tears and I had difficulty in calming him. He should have realized before that I am now a prisoner and, as such, have no right to sit in the superintendent's presence. Of course, Rajagopalachari and Devadas should have been offered seats. That this was omitted was certainly not due to want of courtesy. I do not think the superintendent is accustomed to be present at meetings of this kind. But in my case he declined to take the risk. I should not like the scene to be repeated on a visit from my wife and, even less, that an exception should be made for me and chairs offered. I can keep my dignity even standing. We must have patience for a little, until the English people have advanced enough to extend on every occasion and universally their lovable politeness with unforced cordiality to us Indians. Besides, I do not long for visitors, and would like to ask my friends and relations to restrain themselves in this matter. People may always come to see me on business affairs, since, for this, it does not matter whether external circumstances are favourable or not.

"I hope that Chotani Mian Saheb has distributed the spinning wheels among the poor Muslim women of Panchmahals, Khandesh, and Agra. Unfortunately, I have forgotten the name of the woman missionary who wrote to me from Agra. Possibly Shri Kristodas will remember it.

"I have almost finished with the Urdu manual and would be very grateful for an Urdu dictionary and also any other book you or Dr. Ansari may select for me.

"I hope that you are well. To ask you not to overwork would be to demand the impossible. I can only pray that God will keep you well and strong in all your work."

After the first unpleasantness, the relations between Gandhi and the authorities improved but life in jail did not run always smooth. If he asked for no special privileges for himself, he insisted that the treatment given to fellow prisoners must not be inferior to his.

In the letters addressed to the superintendent of Yeravda prison on May 1 and November 12, 1923, Gandhi wrote:

"You were good enough to show me the order to the effect that certain prisoners sentenced to simple imprisonment will be assigned to a special section and to inform me that I was of the number. In my view some of the prisoners condemned to hard labour like Kaujalgi, Jeramdas and Bhansali are not worse criminals than I am. Besides, they had probably had a higher position than I and in any case they were accustomed to a more comfortable life than I have led for years. So long as such prisoners are not assigned to the special group, it is impossible for me, however much I might like it, to avail myself of the advantage to special prison orders. I would, therefore, be very grateful if you would strike my name off the list of the special section.

"At the time that you informed my comrade, Mr. Abdul Gani, that the prison rules did not allow you to grant him food which cost more than the official ration, I drew your attention to the fact that your predecessor permitted all my comrades as well as myself to arrange our own diet. I further informed you that it was very unpleasant for me to enjoy a favour denied to Abdul Gani, and that for this reason my diet must also be restricted to what is in accordance with the rules and what is allowed to Abdul Gani. You were good enough to ask me to accept the old rations for the time being and to say that the whole question would be discussed with the general inspector, who was shortly to visit the prison. I have now waited ten days. If I am to keep a good conscience I cannot wait any longer, for I have nothing at all to discuss with the general inspector. I have no reason to complain to him of the decision you took in the case of Abdul Gani. I willingly recognize that you are powerless even if you were inclined to help my comrade. Nor is it my aim to work for a change in the food regulations of the prison. I desire one thing only, and that is, to protect myself against any preferential treatment.

"I, therefore, ask you from next Wednesday to give me no more oranges and grapes. In spite of this, my food will still be more expensive than the official ration. I do not know if I need four pounds of goat's milk, but so long as you refuse to reduce my food, so that its cost is in accordance with the rules, I must, although reluctantly, accept the four pounds of milk.

"I do not need to assure you that there is no question of dissension. It is only for the sake of my own inner peace that I propose to you that you should restrict my diet and I beg for your understanding and approval."

Gandhi lived on milk for a month with the result that he lost fourteen pounds in weight. When Kasturbai visited him in the prison she was shocked to see him in a weak condition and successfully persuaded him to take to his normal diet. The superintendent told her that Gandhi had no more ground to complain. Kasturbai said, "Yes, yes, I know my husband. He always mischief."

The prison walls made no difference to Gandhi. He mapped out a programme of studies to finish which six years were not enough. During the first three months he had a vague hope that India would rise to the occasion, "complete the boycott of foreign cloth and unlock the prison gates". But he soon realized that such was not to be the case: "I saw at once that it meant laborious quiet organizing which could not take the nation anything less than five years." He settled down to studies with the zest of "a youth of twenty-four instead of an old man of fifty-four with a broken constitution". He accounted for every minute of his time and read about 150 books on religion, literature, social and natural sciences. For the first time, he read the whole of the Mahabharata and the six systems of Hindu philosophy in Gujarati. He also read Bühler's *Manusmriti* and Max Müller's Upanishads. On the Gita, he read Shankar, Jnaneshwar, Tilak and Aurobindo. He read extensively on Buddhism, Sikhism and Islam, Christianity and Zoroastrianism: Paul Carus' *The Gospel of Buddha*, Rhys Davids' *Lectures on Buddhism*, Amir Ali's *The Spirit of Islam* and *History of Saracens*, Shibli's life of the Prophet, Dr. Mahomed Ali's *Koran*, Dean Farrar's *Seekers After God*, Moulton's *Early Zoroastrianism*, Henry James' *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, Hopkin's *Origin and Evolution of Religions*.

In social sciences, he read Gibbon's *Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Bacon's *Wisdom of the Ancients*, Buckle's *History of Civilization*, Haeckel's *Evolution of Man*, Guizot's *European Civilization*, James' *Our Hellenese Heritage*, Kidd's *Social Evolution*, Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, Wells' *Outline of History*, Gedde's *Evolution of Cities*, Lecky's *European Morals* and Roseberry's *Life of Pitt*.

He also read Goethe's *Faust*, Tagore's *Sadhana*, Shaw's *Man and Superman* and Kipling's *Barrackroom Ballads*.

Gandhi made later a detailed comment on some of the books he read. History, for him, had a special spiritual significance: "It is my pet theory that our Hindu ancestors solved the question for us by ignoring history as it is understood today and by building on slight events their philosophical structure. Such is the Mahabharata. I look to Gibbon and Motley as inferior editions of the Mahabharata... The substance of all these stories is, 'Names and forms matter little, they come and go. That which is permanent and, therefore, necessary eludes the historian of events. Truth transcends history.'"

Gandhi was confined to Yeravda prison which for two years was looked upon as a place of pilgrimage. His only message was: "Peace, non-violence, suffering."

## *Swaraj Party*

### 1922-1923

The imprisonment of Gandhi was received with solemnity showing the nation's determination to follow his message of discipline and non-violence. The Congress Working Committee said: "This committee, while realizing that the conviction of Mahatma Gandhi deprives the country of the guidance of its universally trusted and beloved leader, rejoices that through him India delivers to the world even in her bondage her ancient message of truth and non-violence."

His weapon had acquired glamour and it was being partially used by the Germans in the Ruhr district. The American *Nation* commented: "It is Gandhi, the ascetic prophet of non-co-operation, who has made it possible for Hindus and Muslims to unite in their cry for swaraj, who has sapped the foundations of British rule in India and swept India's struggle into the consciousness of the callous West. What Germany needs is a German Gandhi."

The All-India Congress Committee met at Lucknow on June 7, 1922, to take stock of the situation in the country. Motilal Nehru had just been released from jail. Rajagopalachari, secretary of the Congress, was also present there. Under their guidance the Working Committee passed the following resolution:

"Whereas repression in severe form has been resorted to by the Government in several provinces of the country, in spite of the suspension of all aggressive activities, this committee is of opinion that the civil disobedience will have to be undertaken to enable the country to enforce its demands, and accordingly calls upon provincial committees to make greater efforts in working the constructive programme by the 30th September 1922, when the situation will be considered by this committee and the question of launching civil disobedience will be finally determined."

The Civil Disobedience Inquiry Committee consisting of Hakim Ajmal Khan, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Rajagopalachari, Dr. Ansari,

Vithalbhai Patel and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar was duly appointed to report on the political situation in the country.

The Congress was doing nothing against the Government, and the Congressmen were engrossed in squabbles. The spirit of the leaders was low, but not of the people. At Yeravda, Gandhi was walled as in a tomb. But never did tomb act as a barrier to thought, and Gandhi's spirit animated India.

In August, commenced the daily martyrdom of Guru-ka-Bagh, a sanctuary in gurudwara. As the result of a religious effervescence, one of the Sikh sects, the Akalis, wished to purify the sanctuaries. They had fallen into the hands of guardians of ill repute who refused to abdicate, and the Government took their defence. One thousand Akalis settled near the sanctuary, while 4,000 took up the abode in the Golden Temple at Amritsar, ten miles away. Every day one hundred stately Sikhs from among the 4,000, many of whom served in the war, left the Golden Temple after making the vow of remaining true to the principles of non-violence in thought and deed, and of reaching Guru-ka-Bagh or being brought back unconscious. Similarly from the group of the thousand volunteers twenty-five took the same vow every day. Not far from the sanctuary the police waited at the bridge with iron-tipped rods to stop the manifestation. With a wreath of white flowers around their black turbans, the Akalis arrived every day before the police, and at a short distance they stopped and began to pray silently. The police beat them with the iron-tipped rods, till blood began to flow and the brave Sikhs fell unconscious. It was a new heroism steeled by suffering, "a war of the spirit".

The report of the inquiry committee was ready by October 30, and it was submitted to Das, who was now released and had automatically become the president. The survey said: "It has fallen to us to examine the magnificent work of the greatest man of the age now resting behind the walls of the Yeravda prison. The gravity of our task, apparent as it was at the outset, impressed us more and more strongly as we proceeded with the inquiry. At every step we realized the invaluable guidance afforded by the general plan so carefully worked out by the masterful genius, who till recently, directed the campaign in person. We were naturally reluctant to put it lightly away in his absence from the field of operations. Great, however, as is our respect and admiration for Mahatma Gandhi, we

have not allowed it to come in the way of our clear duty. We have approached his work with reverence but have examined it with care. We have endeavoured to face existing conditions with an open mind controlled only by our unshakable faith in the high purpose of the great movement. We have wholly discountenanced open revolt against the general scheme of non-violent non-co-operation and utter subservience to the minutest detail at the other."

Not only was civil disobedience called impractical for the present, but half the members went to such extremes as to suggest that it be abandoned and a new party be formed to work in the councils. Motilal Nehru, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Vithalbhai Patel, who were in favour of council entry, wrote:

"Times have now changed. Circumstances have altered. The period of struggle is indefinitely prolonged. Measures affecting the daily life of the people are being enacted in the legislature year after year. Fresh taxation and huge liabilities are being imposed with the help and in the name of the so-called representatives of the people, and *nolens volens* the people will have to submit to them. Under these circumstances it is a question for consideration how far the hold of the Congress over the masses can remain unaffected. Suppose the Congress persists in the boycott of the councils in its present form, and it is found that a greater percentage of voters record their votes on the occasion, our claim would be discredited. We are inclined to believe that the policy of abstention has lost its charm, and it is not at all unlikely that a greater percentage of voters will poll at the ensuing elections. In that event, the success gained at the last elections will be a thing of the past and the whole movement will be adversely affected."

The A.-I.C.C. met in Calcutta on November 20. At the end of five days' discussion, the committee resolved that the country was not prepared for mass disobedience, but it authorized provincial committees to sanction on their own responsibility limited civil disobedience, as may be demanded by the situation. The question of council entry was postponed till the annual session, and likewise was deferred the questions of triple boycott, the entry into local bodies and others.

In December the session of the Congress was held at Gaya under the presidentship of Das. In his address, Das advocated council entry and put forward a plan of obstruction, but said that he would

give it up, if the decision of the Khilafat Conference was against it. He wanted Congressmen to return in a majority in the councils and there oppose all measures of the Government. Then either the Government would be compelled to conduct their affairs by certification or would yield to popular demands. In case of certification the Congress members would resign on that issue and seek re-election and again oppose all measures. Even then if the Government did not yield, the Congress members would appeal to the voters to withhold the payment of taxes and thus fall back on civil disobedience. With the exception of the council entry programme, Das stood for non-co-operation.

Rajagopalachari wanted the Congress to adopt full-fledged non-co-operation and his resolution on council boycott was passed by 1,740 votes against 890. The Congress called upon the workers to complete the preparations for offering civil disobedience, and to take immediate steps for the collection of at least Rs. 25 lakhs for the Tilak Swaraj Fund and the enrolment of 50,000 volunteers. The session closed with a resolution to continue non-co-operation. The Khilafat Conference which was held along with the Congress also stood for total non-co-operation.

Das and Motilal Nehru raised a standard of revolt and formed on January 1, 1923, the Swaraj Party with Das as president and Nehru as secretary. The Swaraj Party declared that they wanted to work within the Congress, "having full faith in the creed of the Congress believing that the Gaya programme is not conducive to the speedy attainment of swaraj."

Matters came to a head at the A.-I.C.C. held in May. Das, the President of the Gaya Congress, was the ex-official chairman of the A.-I.C.C. But in this committee there was a majority against him and the Swarajist policy. Das resigned from the chairmanship, and a small centre group emerged and formed the new Working Committee, with Dr. Ansari as president and Jawaharlal Nehru as the general secretary.

The new arrangement was, however, shortlived. Gujarat, which was a no-changers' stronghold, refused to carry out some of the directions of the central office. Another meeting of the All-India Congress Committee was held at Nagpur. The Working Committee representing the centre group came to an end. The resignation was brought about by the failure of an attempt to censure Gujarat

for its indiscipline. Azad was elected president by a majority of four, all the Swarajists voting for him.

At Nagpur, Vallabhbhai Patel was given full powers to guide the Nagpur Flag Satyagraha, started on May 1. Volunteers now began to pour in from all over India. The campaign, in which nearly two thousand volunteers took part, came to a successful termination when on August 18, the Government allowed a procession with the national flag to proceed without any interference.

The tug of war between the Swarajists and the no-changers went on, the former gradually gaining. Another stage, marking a Swarajist advance, was reached at a special session of the Congress held at Delhi, in September. Azad presided. Lajpat Rai who was recently released was for unity in the Congress. According to him though he himself was "not in love with the councils" and "had no delusions as to the part they can play in bringing swaraj", a Congress without Das and Nehru would be a sorry affair. He declared that personally he did not want to seek election even if the bar was removed. Rajagopalachari did not attend the session and left the affairs in the hands of Mahomed Ali, who was released from jail a short while ago. The maulana made a statement that he was searching for the key of Yeravda. He won the day for the Swarajists by announcing that he had received a telegram from Gandhi in their favour. This telegram, of course, was the fictitious product of his lively imagination. He moved a resolution permitting those who had no religious or conscientious objection to stand for election, and suspending the propaganda against council entry. Vallabhbhai Patel and Rajendra Prasad remained neutral and the resolution was passed by a majority.

The Swarajists triumphed at Delhi. They received sanction for contesting the 1923 elections. They had succeeded in constructing an efficient party machine of their own. They had collected funds, they had enlisted workers, they had organized a party press. For some months they had conducted a steady propaganda among the electorate, whom they could now approach with all the prestige then attaching to the no-changers. The Swaraj Party was returned in majority in several provinces and succeeded in capturing just under half the elected seats in the Central Assembly. The success was mainly due to the remarkable combination of Das and Nehru. Das was a great orator; Nehru was a great organizer and disciplinarian.

Between the two of them there was absolute confidence, so much so that each had authorized the other to use his name for any statement, even without previous reference or consultation. They gave strength and prestige to the Swaraj Party.

A few days after the elections, the session of the Congress was held at Cocanada, in December. Mahomed Ali, in his presidential address, paid a glowing tribute to Gandhi:

"More than ever we need our great chief, Mahatma Gandhi, today. Although the man who was most responsible to Mahatma Gandhi's incarceration hoped that by 'burying him alive', as he put it, he would kill the spirit that the Mahatma had infused into the nation, I feel certain that it lives just as surely as the Mahatma lives himself. Friends, the only one who can lead you is the one who had led you at Amritsar, at Calcutta, at Nagpur and at Ahmedabad though each session of the Congress had its own elected president. Our generalissimo is a prisoner of war in the hands of the enemy, and none can fill the void that his absence from our midst has caused. Self-purification through suffering; a moral preparation for the responsibilities of government; self-discipline, as the condition precedent of swaraj, was Mahatma's creed and conviction. And those of us, who have been privileged to have lived in the glorious year that culminated in the Congress session at Ahmedabad, have seen what a rapid change he wrought in the thoughts, feelings and actions of such large masses of mankind."

The Congress permitted the Swarajists to enter councils, though "the principle and policy of that boycott remain unaltered". It urged the people to carry out the constructive programme and prepare for the adoption of civil disobedience. The compromise resolution was moved by Rajagopalachari and seconded by Das.

The year 1923 was not a happy year. The co-operation between the Hindus and Muslims was on the decline and dissensions apace. The issue of Khilafat was solved by the Turks themselves. In November 1922, the Turks under their leader, Mustafa Kamal, rose and deposed the old sultan *cum* Caliph, putting a new figurehead in his place as Caliph only, without temporal power. The old Sultan fled to Malta on a British ship. Mustafa Kamal was elected president and he concentrated all power in himself. The Khilafatists accepted Kamal's decision without protest, for it was now clear to them that nothing that Indian Muslims did was likely

to have much relevance or effect. The struggle was almost over, their enthusiasm was a spent force.

In the bigger cities a number of riots took place, brutal in the extreme. Communalists of various denominations, mostly political reactionaries, emerged now from their retirement. To the detriment of national interest, communalism triumphed. Reaction followed reaction and the Hindu Mahasabha launched upon its *shuddhi* movement. The first significant session of the Hindu Mahasabha was held at Benares in August 1923, Malaviya presiding.

Terrorism began to raise its head once more. Gandhi's ideals and personality had captured the imagination of the emotional youth of Bengal, but they retained their faith in the efficacy of violence as a political weapon. The tide and ebb of non-violent non-co-operation had a visible effect in Bengal. On the collapse of Gandhi's movement the terrorists came in the open and began to preach the necessity of violence. In May there was a recrudescence of political dacoity culminating in assassinations. The attempt of the Government to bring the terrorists to book in the Alipore Conspiracy Case failed. A serious dacoity was effected by armed youths at Chittagong, followed by the assassination of a police officer. Soon after, Mr. Day was murdered in broad daylight in Calcutta being mistaken for the commissioner of police.

Mrs. Besant said: "It is the queerest revolution that ever was, since Gandhi replaced Tilak, has had the queerest leader, and has now the queerest collapse."

Romain Rolland, who wrote *Mahatma Gandhi,* in 1923, observed: "This is the man who has stirred three hundred million people to revolt, who has shaken the foundations of the British Empire, who has introduced into human politics the strongest religious impetus of the last two thousand years." He concluded: "One thing is certain: either Gandhi's spirit will triumph, or it will manifest itself again, as were manifested, centuries before, the Messiah and Buddha, till there finally is manifested, in a moral half-god, the perfect incarnation of the principle of life which will lead a new humanity on to a new path."

## *Escape From Death*

1924

IN THE later years of his prison life, it was known that Gandhi was ailing from some serious disease, never correctly diagnosed. It took a bad turn and developed into appendicitis. On January 11, 1924, he was transferred to Sassoon Hospital, Poona. It was the surgeon of the hospital that raised the first alarm, took him away to his hospital in his own car and decided on an immediate operation. A cryptic communique issued by the Government announced on the morning of January 13: "Mr. Gandhi was operated on for acute appendicitis last night." India was numbed with anxiety.

Srinivasa Sastri broke the news of successful operation in a press statement dated January 13:

"Dr. V. B. Gokhale came to me about 8.45 p.m., just as I was finishing my dinner, and told me how the Yeravda authorities had removed Gandhi to the Sassoon Hospital, where he was in charge. He was about to be operated upon for appendicitis. As the case was serious the patient had been asked whether he would like any doctor friends of his to be sent for. He had mentioned Dr. Dalal of Bombay and Dr. Jivraj Mehta who was in Baroda. Both had been wired to and attempts had been made, but in vain, to get at Dr. Dalal by means of the phone. In view of the patient's temperature and pulse, it had been decided to perform the operation immediately and he was asked whether he would like to have any friends brought to see him. He mentioned me, Dr. Phatak of the non-co-operation party and Mr. N. C. Kelkar. Dr. Gokhale and I started at once and took Dr. Phatak on the way, Mr. Kelkar being away at Satara. On my entering the room we greeted each other and I inquired how he felt as to the operation. He answered firmly that the doctors had come to a definite conclusion and he was content to abide by it. In reply to further inquiry he said that he had full confidence in the medical men about him and that they had been very kind and very careful.

Should there arise any public agitation, he added, then it should be made known that he had no complaint whatever to make against the authorities, and that so far as the care of his body went their treatment left nothing to be desired.

"Then I inquired if Mrs. Gandhi had been informed of his condition. He said that she did not know the latest developments but she knew that for some time he had not been well and he expected to hear from her. He then made enquiries of my wife and some of my colleagues in the Servants of India Society—Messrs. Devadhar, Joshi, Patwardhan and Kunzru. 'Have your frequent journeys out of India benefited your health?' asked the Mahatma.

"Dr. Phatak then read a draft statement to be signed by Mr. Gandhi, conveying his consent to the operation. After hearing it once, Mr. Gandhi put on his spectacles and read it himself. Then he said he would like the wording changed and asked Col. Maddock, who was in the room, what he thought. The colonel said that Mr. Gandhi knew best how to put it in appropriate language, his own suggestion would not be of much value. Then he dictated a longish statement which I took down in pencil. It was addressed to Col. Maddock who was to perform the operation. The letter acknowledged the exceeding kindness and attention which he had received from Col. Maddock, the surgeon-general, other medical officers and attendants, and stated he had full confidence in Col. Maddock. It proceeded to thank the Government for their considerateness in allowing him to send for his own doctors, but as they could not be got in spite of the best attempts made by Col. Maddock and, as delay would, in the opinion of the colonel, involved serious risk, he requested him to perform the operation at once. When it was finished I read it out to him once. Then he called Col. Maddock to his side and I read it again at his desire. Col. Maddock was quite satisfied and remarked, 'Of course, you know best how to put it in proper language.' He then drew up his knees in posture for signing the paper which he did in pencil. His hand shook very much and I noticed that he did not dot the 'i' at the end. He remarked to the doctor, 'See how my hand trembles. You will have to put this right.' Col. Maddock answered, 'Oh, we will put tons and tons of strength into you.'

"As the operation room was being got ready, the doctors went out and I found myself alone with the Mahatma. After a remark

or two of a personal nature I asked him whether he had anything particular to say. I noticed a touch of eagerness as he replied, as though he was waiting for an opportunity to say something. 'If there is an agitation,' he said, 'for my release after the operation, which I do not wish, let it be on proper lines. My quarrel with the Government is there and will continue so long as the originating causes exist. Of course there can't be any conditions. If Government think they have kept me long enough they may let me go. That would be honourable. If they think I am an innocent man and that my motives have been good, that while I have deep quarrel with the Government I love Englishmen and have many friends amongst them, they may release me. But it must not be on false issues. Any agitation must be kept on proper non-violent lines. Perhaps I have not expressed myself quite well but you had better put it in your own inimitable style.' I mentioned the motions of which notice had been given in the assembly and added that though Government might in other circumstances have opposed it, I expected that they would take a different line.

"I then pressed him again for a message to his people, his followers or the country. He was surprisingly firm on this subject. He said he was a prisoner of Government and he must observe the prisoner's code of honour scrupulously. He was supposed to be civilly dead. He had no knowledge of outside events and he could not have anything to do with the public. He had no message.

" 'How is it then that Mahomed Ali communicated a message as from you the other day?' The words were scarcely out of my mouth when I regretted them. But recall was impossible. He was astonished at my question and exclaimed, 'Mr. Mahomed Ali! A message from me!' Luckily at this point the nurse came in with articles of apparel for him and signalled to me to depart. In a few minutes he was shifted to the operation room. I sat marvelling at the exhibitions I had witnessed of high-mindedness, forgiveness, chivalry and love transcending ordinary human nature; and what mercy it was that the non-co-operation movement should have had a leader of such serene vision and sensitiveness to honour! The surgeon-general and the inspector-general of prisons were also there. I could see from their faces how anxious they were at the tremendous responsibility that lay on them. They said that the patient had borne the operation very well indeed, that some puss

had come out and that it was a matter of congratulation that the operation had not been delayed any longer. The patient had had morphia and was expected to sleep soundly for sometime longer when we dispersed."

The one hour of anxiety was a "sacred experience" to Gandhi. In the night of January 12, at ten, he was put on the operation table. The lights failed, then the surgeon used an electric torch which fused half-way through the operation. It took one hour for the resourceful surgeon to negotiate with the dangerous situation.

"Whilst in hospital," wrote Col. Maddock, "Gandhi endeared himself to all those who came into contact with him, on account of his unfailing courtesy and patience, his wonderful cheerfulness, thoughtfulness for others, and complete forgetfulness of himself."

Mahadev Desai, giving a picture of those anxious days, wrote in *Young India*, on January 29:

"But if any one had asked me to write anything about Bapu that day I would not have had the heart to do it. He was so emaciated, so shrivelled up, that you could not bring yourself to be composed enough to say or write anything about his condition. But, thank God, he began picking up unexpectedly fast, and I am happy to say that I feel now able to say something about what is happening in this, the greatest of our places of pilgrimage today.

"These have been days which will live in our annals. The nation had the good fortune to see its revered leader at work, to see him mould heroes out of clay whilst at work. It had yet to see his gospel go forth from his sick-bed and see it translated into act before his eyes. It has done so during the past fortnight. It is a living atmosphere of love of which you begin to feel the effects, as you approach the room which happens to possess today the light that transcends the bounds of time and space.

"I have had the privilege, as unmerited probably, as the one I had two years ago, of being with him these ten days, though not the privilege of serving him. That privilege is being entirely monopolized by the hospital nurses. One of them is an Englishwoman of long experience. He cannot help smiling as she quietly approaches him. One day she comes talking about her pet dogs, and draws Bapu in a conversation about the different varieties of dogs and their usefulness. Another day she talks about her experience in English and African hospitals, and tells him how she has lived throughout

her life the lesson that her doctors taught her of never trying to be popular. A third day she decorates the room with the finest flowers and asks Bapu to admire her work. There was another nurse much younger, but equally fond of Bapu, who prided herself on having him as her first 'private' patient after passing out as a trained nurse. 'Nursing is not always a joy, at times it is a task,' she used to say, 'but it has been a pure joy and a privilege to nurse Mr. Gandhi. The doctor comes and tells me, "You did not use to print your reports like this ever before", and I tell him straightway, "Nor had I such a patient before."'

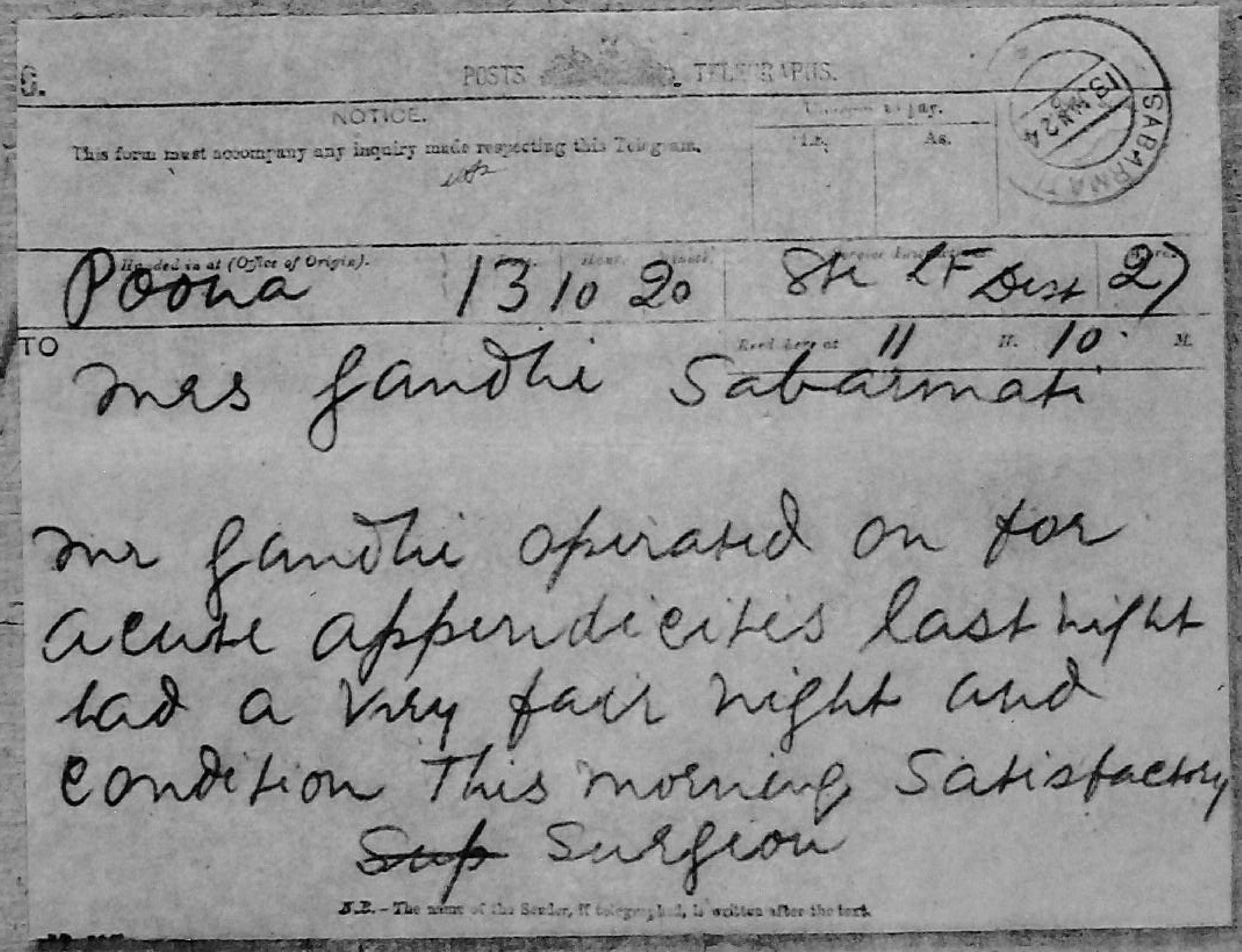
"Another day the nurse told me, 'My friends were chaffing me for getting fond of Mr. Gandhi; I told them they would do the same if they had the privilege of serving him.'

"And the surgeon's love for him is as undisguised as the nurses'. The civil surgeon has had letters and telegrams pouring on him to congratulate him for the way in which he was serving Mahatmaji, and it is not without a blush that he says, 'How am I to reply to all of them? Shall I do it through the press?'

"I do not know if anyone attending Bapu has the slightest consciousness that he is serving a state prisoner. A compelling love chokes all other consciousness.

"But why? Even he who has to look upon him as a prisoner seemed scarcely different in his manner from the rest. Col. Murray, the Yeravda superintendent, came to see Bapu the other day. 'Do you think, Mr. Gandhi, I have neglected you? No, I thought I should not disturb you. And as I see you now after some days I find you very much better. The colonel also assures me you are quickly improving. Your friends always remember you. Mr. Gani especially asked me to tell you that he still gets up at four in the morning. Every one of them is happy and misses you—I hope they do so permanently.' His sweetness was touching. 'Thank you, Col. Murray,' said Bapu, 'but I assure you nothing will please me better than to be up and doing and be under your very kind care once again at Yeravda.' You never could tell, if you did not know him, that a jail superintendent was speaking to one of his prisoners, and you could almost visualize the atmosphere of love created by Bapu in his prison cell at Yeravda.

"But I must say something about Bapu's health, rather than go on talking about his alchemy of love. He looks still emaciated, but



POSTS TELEGRAPHS.

NOTICE.

This form must accompany any inquiry made respecting this Telegram.

Handed in at (Office of Origin). Poona 13 10 20 8h LF Dest 2)

TO Recd. here at 11 H. 10 M.

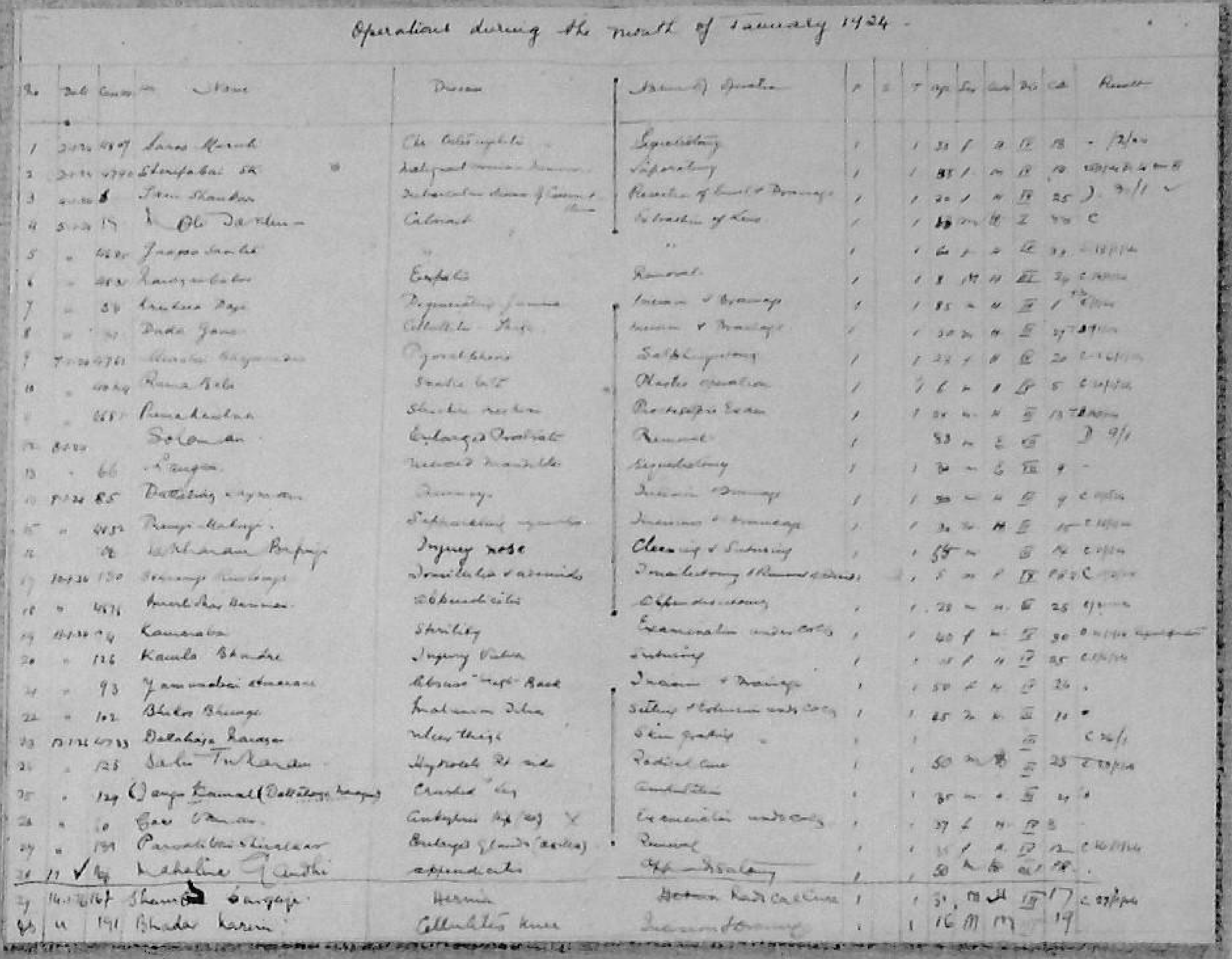
Mrs Gandhi Sabarmati

Mr Gandhi operated on for acute appendicitis last night had a very fair night and condition this morning satisfactory ~~Sup~~ Surgeon

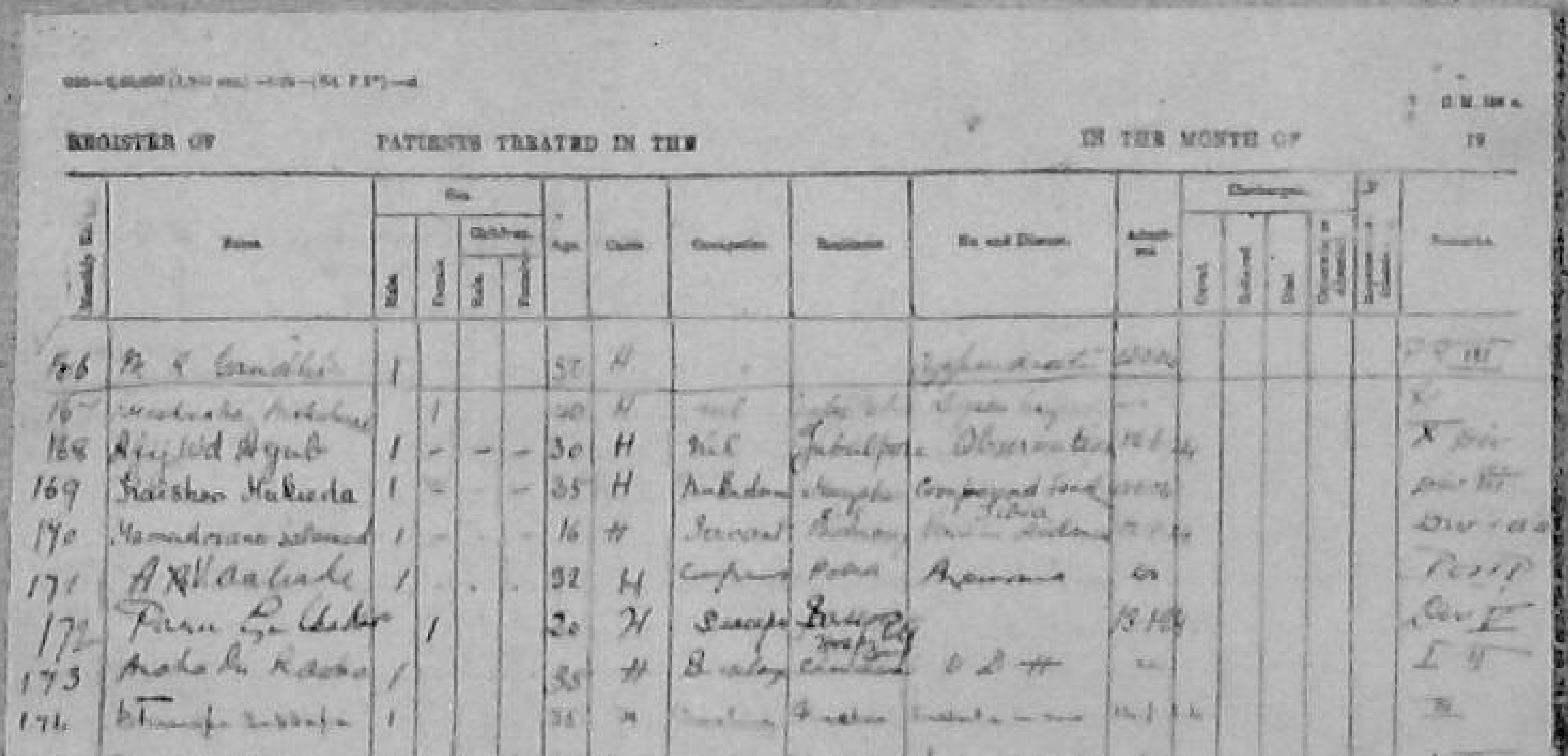
N.B.—The name of the Sender, if telegraphed, is written after the text.

Courtesy : Girdhari Kripalani

Surgeon's message to Kasturbai regarding Gandhi's operation, January 13, 1924



Operations during the month of January 1924.



REGISTER OF PATIENTS TREATED IN THE IN THE MONTH OF 19

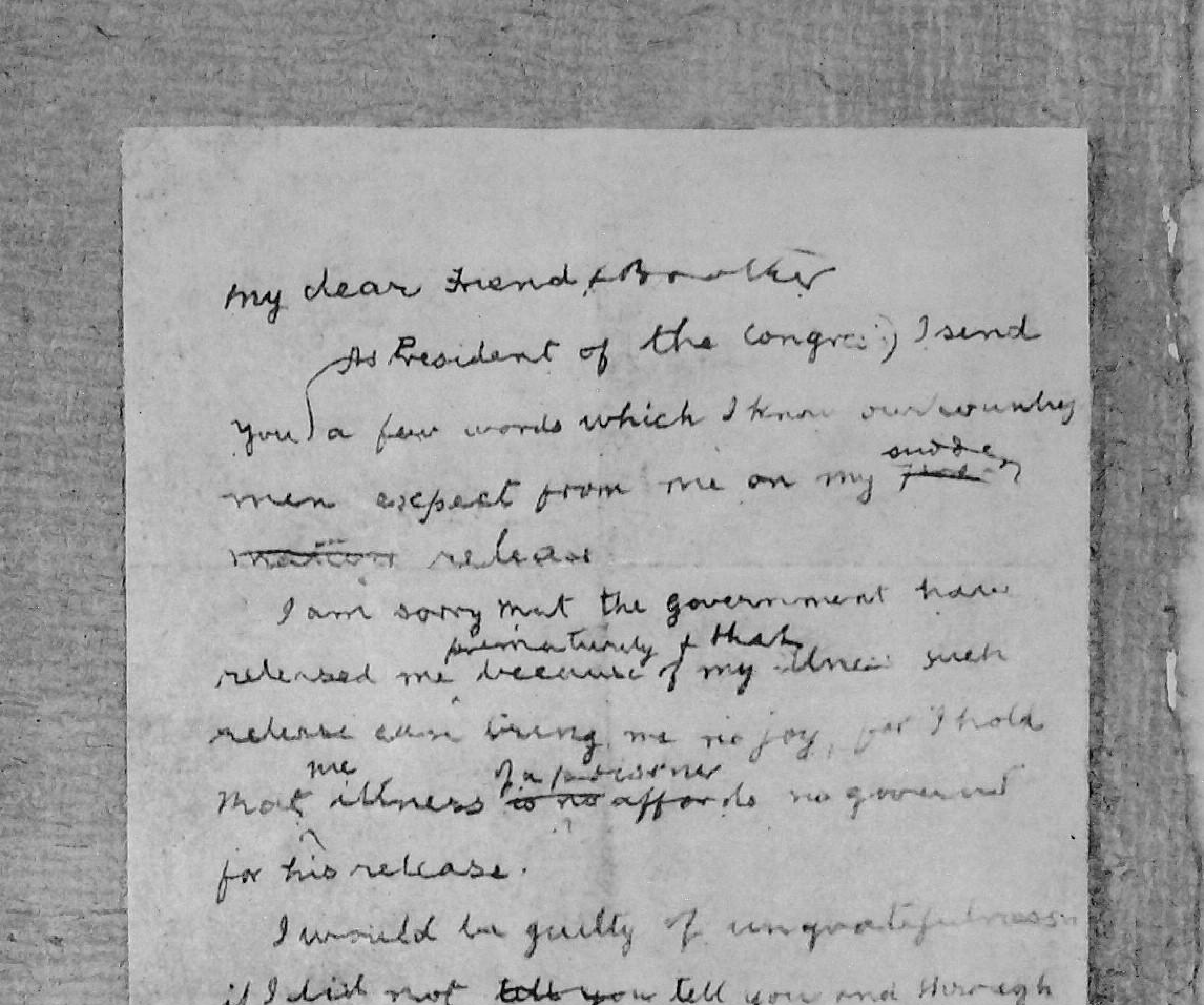
14th January 1924

*Courtesy : Surgeon-General, Government of Bombay*

Pages from Sassoon Hospital register, January 1924

*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi with his surgeon Col. Maddock


My dear Friend & Brother

As President of the Congress, I send you a few words which I know our countrymen expect from me on my sudden ~~untimely~~ release.

I am sorry that the government have prematurely released me because of my illness. Such release can bring me no joy, for I hold that illness of a prisoner affords no ground for his release.

I would be guilty of ungratefulness if I did not ~~tell~~ you tell you and through you the whole public that both the gaol ~~authorities~~ and the hospital authorities have been all attention during my illness. ~~Indeed when about six months ago my old illness~~ dysentery overtook me

*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi's letter to Mahomed Ali, the Congress President, from Sassoon Hospital, Poona, February 7, 1924

he is better than he might have been as he told Rajagopalachari, the other day, rating him for his ill health, adding 'and you are worse than you ought to be.' His weight which at its best was 112 lb. in jail cannot be now very much over a maund, though it is difficult to be precise, as he is still in bed, and cannot be moved out of it. There is no doubt, however, that he is getting stronger every day. There is a chain, hanging down from the top of his bed, of which he gets a hold to enable him to sit up or turn in bed. 'That's for my gymnastics,' he said to a friend the other day. The fingers are still shaky, but not so much as before. His nourishment is nearly half his usual quantity, and consists of about two pounds of milk, a couple of oranges and grapes. The bowels open without the help of the enema, though a mild purgative is at times necessary. Above all he gets most restful sleep of the kind he has never had during the last few years. For even the days in jail were of 'toil unsevered from tranquillity'. From my talks with the surgeon I can say that there is now no cause for anxiety, though the convalescence will certainly be prolonged and even indefinite.

"And need I say anything about the torrents of love that have taken their course to Poona from all the parts of India? Devadas who should be privileged to be with his father for all the time has to content himself serving him by attending to the numerous letters and telegrams coming day and night inquiring after Bapu's health. But the telegrams and letters do not exhaust the affections. One day the residents of far-off Tanjore write to say that they did their *archanas* and *abhishekams* in a particular mandir, and send on the sacred ashes and *kum-kum* for Mahatmaji, another day comes a letter from Kashi telling Devadas that special *japas* were performed in the temple of Mrityunjaya Mahadev, the Conqueror of Death, that hundreds of Brahmins will be continuing their *anushthanams* until Mahatmaji gets better, and they do not omit to send the sacred water of the Ganges and the sacred ashes also. Hindus from Shiyali (Tirupur) and Dindigul vie in their love with their Musalman brethren of Nagore who send special *tabarruk*, *prasadam*, of some *aulia*. A Parsi sister writes offering her blood if the surgeons thought it necessary to put in blood in Mahatmaji, while an English lady writes detailed instructions about Bapu's diet, and Mrs. Gokhale from Bombay writes to say that she will spin an extra couple of hours every day, now that Mahatmaji cannot spin.

"One of the constant visitors at the hospital—and of these there is no end, my duty there being only that of standing at the gate to keep them away—is an Englishman, an old military pensioner, who makes it a point to come every other day with a bouquet of flowers, and gets into Bapu's room, unobstructed by any one. It is simply impossible to stop him. Impatiently he rushes to Bapu, shakes his hand, and delivers his message of cheer in a few seconds and walks away. 'Cheer up old man. I see that you are very much better than yesterday. I know you must get better. How old are you? Fifty-five. Oh, it is nothing. I am eighty-two. Get better, please do.' One day he stopped and asked, 'Can I do anything for you Mr. Gandhi?' 'No,' said Bapu, 'Please pray for me.' 'That I will, but tell me if I can do anything for you. Please do tell me. Believe me to be your brother.' To which Bapu replies with a smile, 'Believe me I have amongst my friends a number of Englishmen whom I regard as more than my brothers.' The man is deeply touched, moved out assuring us that he prays thrice every day that Mr. Gandhi may live up to his age, and also telling us that many Englishmen pray for him, and many officers inquire after him.

"The picture will be incomplete if I do not say a word about the illustrious leaders who are now flocking to Poona to see their leader. They did not come until now, as they knew it would not be well to disturb him. A man like Mr. Jayakar says, 'I will now come, but will only have his *darshan* from a distance', and Jawaharlal assures Devadas that he would come last of all. The big brother comes, and insists that Mahatmaji should not talk to him, fumbles about on Mahatmaji's bed for his legs, which he finds with some difficulty, opens out the covering, and kisses them. Shankarlal and others like him are choked with tears and Pandit Motilal has no heart to get away without bidding him good-bye a second time, and deliberately misses a train. Lalaji comes eager to have a talk with him, but stands aside, almost in spite of himself, so that he may not draw him into a talk with him. He visits him again before leaving Poona. There is something in him which is struggling to find expression. Probably it checks the tears, or the tears check it. But ultimately it succeeds and bursts out. But Bapu with his inimitable smile says, 'Lalaji, the joke is too big for my stomach. I would have a hearty laugh, but for the wound and the stitches.' Lalaji, who would have gone otherwise with a heavy heart, goes away with a much lighter heart, not without

assuring others also that we may not be sad now, but rejoice that God in His infinite mercy has blessed us."

He progressed well enough. On February 5 the communique announced: "The Government of Bombay have received medical advice that Mr. Gandhi should be removed to seaside for a prolonged period of convalescence, not less than six months in any event. In these circumstances, they have decided with the concurrence of the Government of India, to remit unconditionally under section 401, Code of the Criminal Procedure, the unexpired portion of his sentences. Orders will be issued immediately for his release."

It was at Sassoon Hospital, on the morning of February 5, while Gandhi and Andrews were talking, Col. Maddock came in and announced to Gandhi the news of his release. He then read out to him words of the official message and said it had come to him on the previous night by a special messenger. He had taken the earliest opportunity of coming to him as he wished to be the first man to break the news that Gandhi was now free.

Gandhi remained quiet for a few minutes and then said to Col. Maddock with a smile, "I hope you will allow me to remain your patient and also your guest a little longer." The surgeon laughed and said that he trusted that his patient would go on obeying his orders, as a doctor, and that he himself might have very great pleasure and satisfaction of seeing him thoroughly restored to health. Later on in the morning, after dressing the wound, Col. Maddock gave warning that the recovery of the patient which was going on so well might be seriously retarded if any unnecessary excitement or tiredness was caused in the next few days by the visitors.

As he was convalescing, the first public message came from him in the form of a letter addressed to Mahomed Ali:

"I send you, as President of the Congress, few words which I know our countrymen expect from me on my sudden release. I am sorry that the Government have prematurely released me on account of my illness. Such a release can bring me no joy, for I hold that the illness of a prisoner affords no ground for his release.

"I would be guilty of ungratefulness if I did not tell you, and through you the whole public, that both the jail and the hospital authorities have been all attention during my illness. Col. Murray, the superintendent of the Yeravda prison, as soon as he suspected that my illness was at all serious, invited Col. Maddock to assist him

and I am sure that the promptest measures were taken by him to secure for me the best treatment possible. I could not have been removed to the David and Jacob Sassoon Hospitals earlier. Col. Maddock and his staff have treated me with the utmost attention and kindness. I may not omit the nurses who have surrounded me with sisterly care. Though it is now open to me to leave this hospital, knowing that I can get no better treatment anywhere else, with Col. Maddock's kind permission, I have decided to remain under his care till the wound is healed and no further medical treatment is necessary.

"The public will easily understand that for sometime to come I shall be unfit for active work, and those, who are interested in my speedy return to active life, will hasten it by postponing their natural desire to see me. I am unfit, and shall be so for some weeks perhaps, to see a number of visitors. I shall better appreciate the affection of friends, if they will devote greater time and attention to such national work as they may be engaged in and especially to hand-spinning.

"My release has brought me no relief. Whereas before release, I was free from responsibility save that of conforming to jail discipline and trying to qualify myself for more efficient service, I am now overwhelmed with a sense of responsibility I am ill-fitted to discharge. Telegrams of congratulations have been pouring in upon me. They have but added to the many proofs I have received of the affection of our countrymen for me. It naturally pleases and comforts me. Many telegrams, however, betray hopes of results from my service which stagger me. The thought of my utter incapacity to cope with the work before me humbles my pride.

"Though I know very little of the present situation in the country I know sufficient to enable me to see that perplexing as the national problems were at the time of the Bardoli resolutions, they are far more perplexing today. It is clear that without unity between the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and other Indians, all talk of swaraj is idle. This unity which I fondly believed in 1922 had been nearly achieved has so far as Hindus and Musalmans are concerned, I observe, suffered a severe check. Mutual trust has given place to distrust. An indissoluble bond between the various communities must be established if we are to win freedom. Will the thanksgiving of the nation over my release be turned into a solid

unity between the communities? That will restore me to health far quicker than any medical treatment or rest-cure. When I heard in the jail of the tension between Hindus and Musalmans in certain places, my heart sank within me. The rest I am advised to have will be no rest with the burden of disunion preying upon me. I ask all those who cherish love towards me to utilize it, in furtherance of the union we all desire. I know that the task is difficult. But nothing is difficult if we have a living faith in God. Let us realize our own weakness and approach Him, and He will surely help. It is weakness which breeds fear, and fear breeds distrust. Let us both shed our fear, but even if one of us will cease to fear we shall cease to quarrel. Nay, I say that your tenure of office will be judged solely by what you can do in the cause of union. I know that we love each other as brothers. I ask you, therefore, to share my anxiety and help me to go through the period of illness with a lighter heart.

"If we could but visualize the growing pauperism of the land and realize that the spinning wheel is the only remedy for the disease, the wheel will leave us little leisure for fighting. I had during the last two years ample time and solitude for hard thinking. It made me a firmer believer than ever in the efficacy of the Bardoli programme and, therefore, in the unity between the races, the charkha, removal of untouchability, and the application of non-violence in thought, word and deed to our methods, as indispensable for swaraj. If we faithfully and fully carry out this programme we need never resort to civil disobedience, and I should hope that it will never be necessary. I must state that my thinking prayerfully and in solitude has not weakened my belief in the efficiency and righteousness of civil disobedience. I hold it, as never before, to be a man's or a nation's right and duty, when its vital being is in jeopardy. I am convinced that it is attended with less danger than war, and whilst the former when successful benefits both the resister and the wrong-doer, the latter harms both the victor and the vanquished.

"You will not expect me to express any opinion on the vexed question of return by Congressmen to the legislative councils and assembly. Though I have not in any way altered my opinion about the boycott of councils, law courts and government schools, I have no data for coming to a judgement upon the alterations made at Delhi, and I do not propose to express any opinion, until I have had the opportunity of discussing the question with our illustrious

countrymen who have felt called upon in the interest of the country to advise removal of the boycott of legislative bodies.

"In conclusion may I, through you, thank all the very numerous senders of congratulatory messages? It is not possible for me to acknowledge each message personally. It has gladdened my heart to see among the messages many from our moderate friends. I have, and non-co-operators can have, no quarrel with them. They too are well-wishers of their country and serve to the best of their lights. If we consider them to be in the wrong, we can hope to win them over only by friendliness and patient reasoning, never by abusing. We want to regard Englishmen too as our friends and not misunderstand them by treating them as our enemies. And if we are engaged in a struggle against the British Government it is against the system for which it stands and not against Englishmen who are administering the system. I know that many of us have failed to understand the distinction and, in so far as we have failed, we have harmed our cause."

On February 10, prayers were offered throughout the country—in mosques, temples and even in the churches—for Gandhi's speedy restoration to health and long life. A girl of sixteen in Lahore who was on death-bed, did not forget Gandhi. Her last words were that she was glad to have been enabled to stick to her vow of khadi; with a fainting voice she said that a sum of hundred rupees should be placed at Gandhi's disposal as her dying contribution towards the Swaraj Fund.

## *At Juhu*

1924

On March 10, 1924 Gandhi went to convalesce at Juhu, a seaside place near Bombay. The solitary one-storey bungalow, "Palm Bun", surrounded by tall palm trees and facing the sea, became a place of pilgrimage for prominent Indian leaders.

The first contact he was to make outside India, after his release, was with Romain Rolland. Gandhi wrote to him on March 22 his first letter, which was to serve as a prelude to their friendship. Rolland made himself the mouthpiece of Gandhi's ideas in Europe, and he tried to link them up with social action in Europe. In his foreword to the French edition of a collection of Gandhi's articles in *Young India*, he wrote: "I saw surging up in the plains of the Indus the citadel of the spirit, which had been raised by the frail and unbreakable Mahatma. And I set myself to rebuild it in Europe."

In Europe Gandhi's thought was confused with that of enervated pacifism, which bends it back and acquiesces bleatingly. Rolland drew attention on the "fighting character" of Gandhi's ideas. "I wished to see in the fighting communism of the U.S.S.R. and the civil disobedience of an India, organized and guided by Gandhi, the two great wings of the revolution." He expressed the wish that "they would co-ordinate and regulate their common rhythm." He did not succeed in convincing the partisans of these movements. "A project of that sort was bound to break against the intransigence of two faiths, each of which considered itself to be in sole possession of the truth: the truth of the other seemed to be an enemy." Rolland added: "For me, who saw in the most powerful social or religious doctrines not dogmas but vigorous hypotheses laying down a road for the advance of men—for me the two doctrines of the U.S.S.R. and of Gandhist India seemed to be—as Gandhi himself confessed was his own view—two experiments, the two greatest, the two most efficacious, the only ones efficacious enough to wrench

world of men away from the catastrophe into which it is about to plunge. And I thought that the two together would not be more than adequate to secure its salvation. Instead then of destroying each other, could not one see to it that they united against the common enemy? Though I failed, I do not regret in the least having made the effort."

After two years' interruption, Gandhi resumed editorial charge of his two weeklies, *Young India* and *Navajivan*, in the first week of April. Friends persuaded him not to work for a few months, but he told them that, if he was allowed by overkind visitors to have the quiet he needed, the editorial job would be for him rather a kind of mental recreation than a task. He appealed to the people not to burden him with visits: "The capital of energy at my disposal is very small, and I want to utilize it only in service. I need absolute quiet. If all my time and energy are taken up seeing and entertaining you, it will not be possible for me to edit the weeklies in the way I desire. Love is a great force, and I would have you apply that force not to seeing me, but to the service of the people. I would have you send me money that you have to expend on a visit to me for being spent on the production and propagation of khaddar."

In his absence, the circulation of *Young India* had suffered very considerably. Whereas at the time of his imprisonment the number of subscribers was 21,500, now it stood at 3,000. Shuaib Qureshi, C. Rajagopalachari and George Joseph were acting as editors. As Gandhi was now resuming the editorship, the manager had been instructed to print extra copies of the ensuing number. In his first article, entitled "For the Readers Past and Present of *Young India*", Gandhi wrote on April 3:

"It is not without much hesitation that I resume the editorship of *Young India*. I do not know whether my health can yet sustain the energy required for conducting the paper. But I cannot foresee. I can only dimly understand God's purpose in bringing me out of my retirement in Yeravda. In taking up the editorial control of the *Navajivan* and *Young India* I am following the light as far as I see it.

"Nor have I any new message to deliver to the reader. I had hoped for release by an act of a swaraj parliament and to be able to take my humble share in serving free India. That was not to be.

"We have yet to attain freedom. I have no new programme. My faith in the old is just as bright as ever, if not brighter. Indeed,

one's faith in one's plans and methods is truly tested when the horizon before one is the blackest.

"Though, therefore, so far as my mind can perceive, there will be no new method or policy developed in the pages of *Young India*, I hope they will not be stale. *Young India* will be stale when Truth becomes stale. I want to see God face to face. God I know is Truth. For me the only certain means of knowing God is non-violence—ahimsa—love. I live for India's freedom and would die for it, because it is part of Truth. Only a free India can worship the true God. I work for India's freedom because my swadeshi teaches me that being in it and having inherited her culture, I am fittest to serve her and she has a prior claim to my service. But my patriotism is not exclusive; it is calculated not only not to hurt any other nation but to benefit all in the true sense of the word. India's freedom as conceived by me can never be a menace to the world.

"But if it is not to be such a menace, the means adopted for gaining it must be strictly non-violent. My interest in India's freedom will cease if she adopts violent means, for their fruit will be not freedom but slavery in disguise. And if we have not yet attained our freedom, it is because we have not been non-violent in thought, word and deed. It is true that non-violence has been adopted as policy, that is because we are convinced that by no other means can India achieve her freedom. Our policy is not, must not be, a camouflage. We may not harbour violence under cover of non-violence. Whilst we claim to be non-violent for a particular purpose and a particular period, our thought and word must accord with our practice for that purpose and that period. Even so does a gaoler act towards a condemned man. He protects his life at the peril of his own till the date of the extreme penalty. He thinks and speaks of his safety. He is, for the time and the person, non-violent in thought, word and deed.

"We pledged ourselves to be non-violent towards each other and our opponents, whether administrators or co-operators. We were to appeal to their hearts and evoke the best in them, not play upon their fear to gain our end. Consciously or unconsciously the majority of us—the articulate portion—have not been true to our pledge. We have been intolerant towards our opponents. Our own countrymen are filled with distrust of us. They simply do not believe in our non-violence. Hindus and Musalmans in many places have provided an object-lesson not in non-violence but in violence. Even the

'changers' and 'no-changers' have flung mud against one another. Each has claimed the monopoly of truth and with an ignorant certainty of conviction sworn at the other for his helpless stupidity.

"The pages of *Young India* can only, therefore, illustrate the utility and the necessity of non-violence in dealing with the questions that engage public attention."

As soon as he resumed the editorship, correspondence poured in asking questions. In the very first issue of *Young India* he had to explain why he got operated, and not followed his own teaching in *Hind Swaraj*. "What is written there has reference to an ideal state," wrote Gandhi. "I had precious medical friends when I wrote the book and did not hesitate to seek their advice in times of need. That was as the writer implies inconsistent with my belief regarding the use of medicine. Several friends have said to me the same thing in so many words. I plead guilty. But that is to admit that I am not a perfect man. Unfortunately for me I am far from perfect. I know my way to it. But knowing the way is not reaching its end. If I was perfect, if I had acquired full control over all my passions even in thought, I should be perfect in body. I am free to confess that daily I am obliged to expend a great amount of mental energy in acquiring control over my thoughts. When I have succeeded, if I ever do, think what a storehouse of energy would be set free for service. As I hold that appendicitis was a result of infirmity of thought or mind, so do I concede that my submission to the surgical operation was an additional infirmity of mind. If I was absolutely free of egoism, I would have resigned myself to the inevitable; but I wanted to live in the present body. Complete detachment is not a mechanical process. One has to grow to it by patient toil and constant prayer."

Week after week he filled *Young India* with his articles. Apart from his comments on the current politics, which gave a lead to the people and were generally made with a view to reconciling divergent interests and factions, Gandhi mainly bent his energies to the furtherance of the constructive programme. The spinning wheel was a passion with him and the profits made from his writings by the Navajivan Press were mainly spent on khadi work. The Hindu-Muslim question and the curse of untouchability were the theme of much comment. He blessed and guided Vaikom satyagraha undertaken on behalf of untouchables of Travancore. In a series

of ten articles he gave a glimpse of his jail experiences, the most human document of its kind.

Gandhi wrote almost on every subject except on the controversial topic of council entry. The Swarajists under the leadership of Das and Nehru had scored many victories in the councils but they wanted blessings from Gandhi. In April, Das and Nehru went to Juhu to apprise him of the political situation. They wanted to explain to him the Swarajist position, and to gain his passive co-operation at least, if not his active sympathy. The Juhu talks did not succeed in influencing Gandhi to any extent. Behind all friendly talk the fact remained that there was no compromise. They agreed to differ, and statements to this effect were issued to the press. Gandhi's statement dated May 22 read thus:

"After having discussed with the Swarajist friends the vexed question of entry into the assembly and the councils by Congressmen, I am sorry to have to say that I have not been able to see eye to eye with the Swarajists. I assure the public that there has been no lack of willingness of effort on my part to accept the Swarajist position. My task would be much simpler, if I could identify myself with it. It can be no pleasure to me to oppose, even in thought, the most valued and respected leaders, some of whom have made great sacrifice in the cause of the country and who yield to no one in their love of freedom of the motherland; but in spite of my effort and willingness, I have failed to be convinced by their argument. Nor is the difference between them and myself one of mere detail. There is an honest and fundamental difference. I retain the opinion that council entry is inconsistent with non-co-operation, as I conceive it. Nor is this difference a mere matter of interpretation of the word 'non-co-operation', but relates to the essential mental attitude resulting in different treatment of vital problems. It is with reference to such mental attitude that the success or failure of the triple boycott is to be judged, and not by a reference to the actual results attained. It is from that point of view that I say that to be out of the legislative bodies is far more advantageous to the country than to be in them. I have, however, failed to convince my Swarajist friends, but I recognize, so long as they think otherwise, their place is undoubtedly in the councils. It is the best for us all.

"It was hardly to be expected that the Swarajists could be convinced by the arguments I have advanced in the course of the

conversations. There are many of them who are amongst the ablest, most experienced, and honest patriots. They have not entered the legislative bodies, without fullest deliberation, and they must not be expected to retire from the position until experience has convinced them of the futility of their method.

"The question, therefore, before the country is not an examination and distribution of the merits of the Swarajist view and mine. The question is, what is to be done regarding council entry as a settled fact? Are the non-co-operators to keep up their hostility against the Swarajist method, or are they to remain neutral and even help wherever it is possible or consistent with their principles?

"The Delhi and Cocanada resolutions have now permitted those Congressmen who have no conscientious scruples as such to enter councils and the assembly, if they wanted to. In my opinion, the Swarajists are, therefore, justified in entering the legislative bodies and expecting perfect neutrality on the part of the 'no-changers'. They are also justified in resorting to obstruction, because such was their policy, and the Congress laid down no conditions as to their entry. If the work of the Swarajists prospers and the country benefits, such an ocular demonstration cannot but convince honest sceptics like me of our error, and I know the Swarajists to be patriotic enough to retrace their steps when experience has disillusioned them. I would, therefore, be no party to putting any obstacles in their way or to carrying on any propaganda against the Swarajists' entry into the legislatures, though I cannot actively help them in a project in which I do not believe. The purpose of the Delhi and Cocanada resolutions was to allow the Swarajists a chance of trying the method of council entry and that purpose can be served only if the 'no-changers', with scrupulous honesty, allow the Swarajists full liberty to pursue their own programme in the councils, unfettered by any obstruction from them.

"With regard to the method of work in the councils, I will say that I would enter a legislative body, if only I found that I could use it to advantage. If, therefore, I enter the councils, I should, without following a general policy of obstruction, endeavour to give strength to the constructive programme of the Congress. I should, therefore, move resolutions requiring the central and the provincial Governments, as the case may be, first, to make all their cloth purchases in hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar; secondly,

to impose a prohibitive duty on foreign cloth; thirdly, to abolish the drink and drug revenue, and at least correspondingly reduce the army expenditure.

"If the Government refuse to enforce such resolutions when carried in the legislatures, I should invite them to dissolve them and take the vote of the electors on the specific points. If the Government would not dissolve, I should resign my seat and prepare the country for civil disobedience. And when that stage is reached, the Swarajist friends will find me ready to work with and under them. My test of fitness for civil disobedience remains exactly the same as before.

"During the state of probation I should advise the 'no-changers' not to worry about what the Swarajists are doing or saying, and to prove their own faith by prosecuting the constructive programme with undivided energy and concentration. Khaddar and national schools are enough to occupy every available worker who believes in quiet, honest and undemonstrative work. The Hindu-Muslim problem too will tax the best energy and faith of the workers. The 'no-changers' can justify their opposition to the council entry, only by showing the results of their application to the constructive programme, even as the 'pro-changers' must justify their entry by results. The 'no-changers' are in one respect in an advantageous position for they can secure the co-operation of the 'pro-changers'. The latter have declared their faith in the constructive programme, but their contention is, that by itself, this programme as such cannot enable the country to reach the goal. In the prosecution, however, of the constructive programme outside the legislatures, all —'no-changers', 'pro-changers', and others—can, if they will, work in union through their respective organizations, if necessary."

Gandhi expressed his views on Congress organization a few days later: "Frank recognition of honest differences will accelerate the country's progress as a patched-up compromise designed to hide differences would have retarded it." After giving his ground he said: "It all follows, therefore, that the executive organization of the Congress must not contain titled persons, government schoolmasters, practising lawyers and members of legislative bodies and persons who use foreign cloth or cloth manufactured even in our mills." He was of opinion that for efficient work the Congress executive must be in the hands of one party.

More vital question than that of council entry was the urgent problem of Hindu-Muslim unity. Practically the whole of *Young India*, dated May 29, was devoted to the Hindu-Muslim question. "There is no question more important and pressing than this," said Gandhi. "In my opinion it blocks all progress." He invited the people to study his statement most carefully and favour him with "views or information—not necessarily for publication—that may throw additional light on the question or correct any errors of fact or opinion." To rivet the attention of the reader, "Hindu-Muslim Tension—Its Cause and Cure" was printed in bold type in double column running into ten pages of *Young India*.

In some provinces the cause of tension was economic. Economic relations such as between tenants and landlords, debtors and money-lenders, were given a communal tinge by interested parties. Religious fanatics in each community attacked the other religion and sought to add to its fold men and women of other communities. The Muslims claimed their right to carry on *tabligh*; Hindus replied by proclaiming their right to *shuddhi*. These attempts at conversion brought conflict. Papers and pamphlets became the vehicles of malicious propaganda and in many cases were the cause of the riots. Hardly a fortnight passed without the news of a disturbance somewhere. In several places there were riots with incendiarism, looting and destruction of property, and desecration of sacred places.

Some Hindus laid the blame at Gandhi's door: "You asked the Hindus to make common cause with the Muslims on the Khilafat question. That resulted in unifying and awakening the Musalmans, and now that the Khilafat is over, the awakened Muslims have proclaimed a kind of holy war against us Hindus." The Muslims said: "We simple-minded people have been unjustly treated. You by your agitation won over Mahomed Ali to your side and you attacked the famous institution at Aligarh built with patient care by Sir Syed Ahmed. Your boycott of councils prevented our able men from going to the councils to the prejudice of the interests of our community."

In the historic article on Hindu-Muslim tension, Gandhi analysed the causes and suggested a solution, and declared that he was entirely unrepentant for what he had done. "Had I been a prophet and foreseen all that has happened, I should still have thrown myself into the Khilafat agitation," said Gandhi. "The awakening

of the masses was a necessary part of the training. It is a tremendous gain. I would do nothing to put the people to sleep again."

The article on the Hindu-Muslim tension which was soon issued as a pamphlet evoked a number of questions and cross-questions. In a long introduction to the booklet, he wrote:

"I am requesting my countrymen to adopt non-violence as their final creed, for the purpose of regulating the relations between the different races, and for the purpose of attaining swaraj. Hindus and Musalmans, Christians, Sikhs and Parsis must not settle their differences by resort to violence, and the means for the attainment of swaraj must be non-violent. This I venture to place before India, not as a weapon of the weak, but of the strong. The Hindus and Musalmans prate about no compulsion in religion. What is it but compulsion, if Hindus will kill a Musalman for saving a cow? It is like wanting to convert a Musalman to Hinduism by force. Similarly what is it but compulsion, if Musalmans seek to prevent by force Hindus from playing music before mosques? Virtue lies in being absorbed in one's prayers in the presence of din and noise. We shall both be voted irreligious savages by posterity, if we continue to compel one another to respect our religious wishes.

"I am sure that if we can but revert to our faith, if we ever had any, in non-violence, limited to the two purposes above referred to, the present tension between the two communities will largely subside. For, in my opinion, an attitude of non-violence in our mutual relations is an indispensable condition prior to a discussion of the remedies for the removal of the tension. It must be common cause between the two communities that neither party shall take the law into its own hands, but that all points in dispute, wherever and whenever they arise, shall be decided by reference either to private arbitration, or to the law courts, if they wish. This is the whole meaning of non-violence, so far as communal matters are concerned. To put it another way, just as we do not break one another's heads in respect of civil matters, so may we not do even in religious matters. This is the pact that is immediately necessary between the parties, and I am sure that everything else will follow.

"Unless this elementary condition is recognized, we have no atmosphere for considering the ways and means of removing misunderstanding and arriving at an honourable, lasting settlement. But, assuming that the acceptance of the elementary condition will

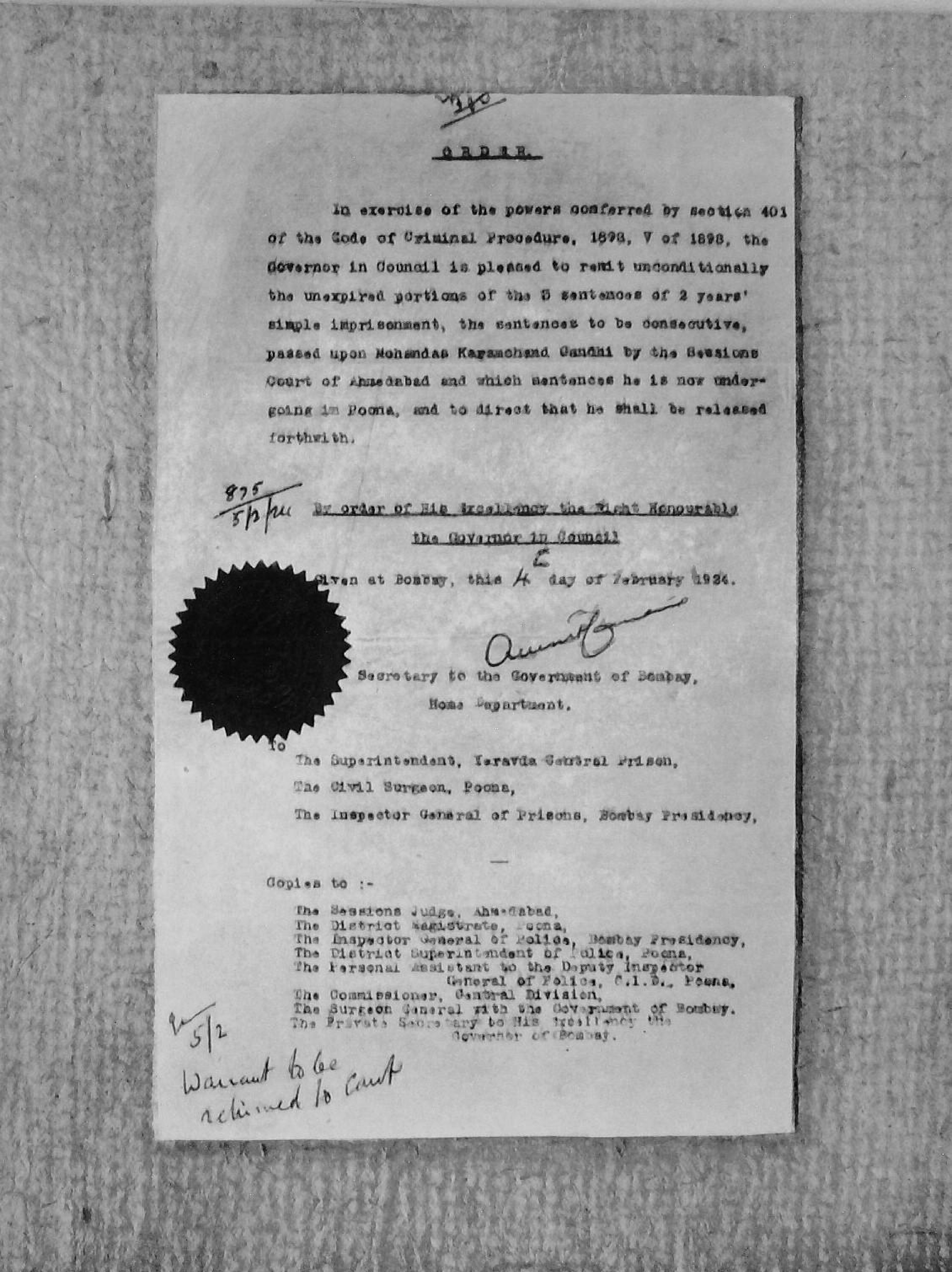
be a common cause between the two communities, let us consider the constant disturbing factors.

"My non-violence does not admit of running away from danger and leaving dear ones unprotected. Between violence and cowardly flight, I can prefer violence to cowardice. I can no more preach non-violence to a cowardly man than I can tempt a blind man to enjoy healthy scenes. Non-violence is the summit of bravery. And in my own experience, I have had no difficulty in demonstrating to men trained in the school of violence the superiority of non-violence. As a coward, which I was for years, I harboured violence. I began to prize non-violence only when I began to shed cowardice. Those Hindus who ran away from the post of duty, when it was attended with danger, did so not because they were non-violent, or because they were afraid to strike, but because they were unwilling to die or even suffer any injury. A rabbit that runs away from the bull-terrier is not particularly non-violent. The poor thing trembles at the sight of the terrier and runs for very life.

"The way, however, does not lie through *akhadas*. Not that I mind them. On the contrary, I want them for physical culture. Then they should be for all. But, if they are meant as a preparation for self-defence in the Hindu-Musalman conflicts, they are foredoomed to failure. Musalmans can play the same game, and such preparations, secret or open, do cause suspicion and irritation. They can provide no remedy. It is for the thoughtful few to make quarrels impossible by making arbitration popular and obligatory.

"My Hindu instinct tells me that all religions are more or less true. All proceed from the same God but all are imperfect because they have come down to us through imperfect human instrumentality. The real *shuddhi* movement should consist in each one trying to arrive at perfection in his own faith. In such a plan, character would be the only test. What is the use of crossing from one compartment to another, if it does not mean a moral rise? What is the meaning of my trying to convert to the service of God—for that must be the implication of *shuddhi* or *tabligh*—when those who are in my fold are daily denying God by their actions? 'Physician, heal thyself' is more true in matters religious than mundane.

"If Hindu-Muslim unity is endangered because an Arya Samaj preacher or a Musalman preacher preaches his faith in obedience to a call from within, that unity is only skin-deep. Why should



ORDER.

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 401 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, V of 1898, the Governor in Council is pleased to remit unconditionally the unexpired portions of the 3 sentences of 2 years' simple imprisonment, the sentences to be consecutive, passed upon Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi by the Sessions Court of Ahmedabad and which sentences he is now undergoing in Poona, and to direct that he shall be released forthwith.

875 5/2/24

By order of His Excellency the Right Honourable the Governor in Council

Given at Bombay, this 4th day of February 1924.

Secretary to the Government of Bombay, Home Department.

To

The Superintendent, Yeravda Central Prison,
The Civil Surgeon, Poona,
The Inspector General of Prisons, Bombay Presidency,

—

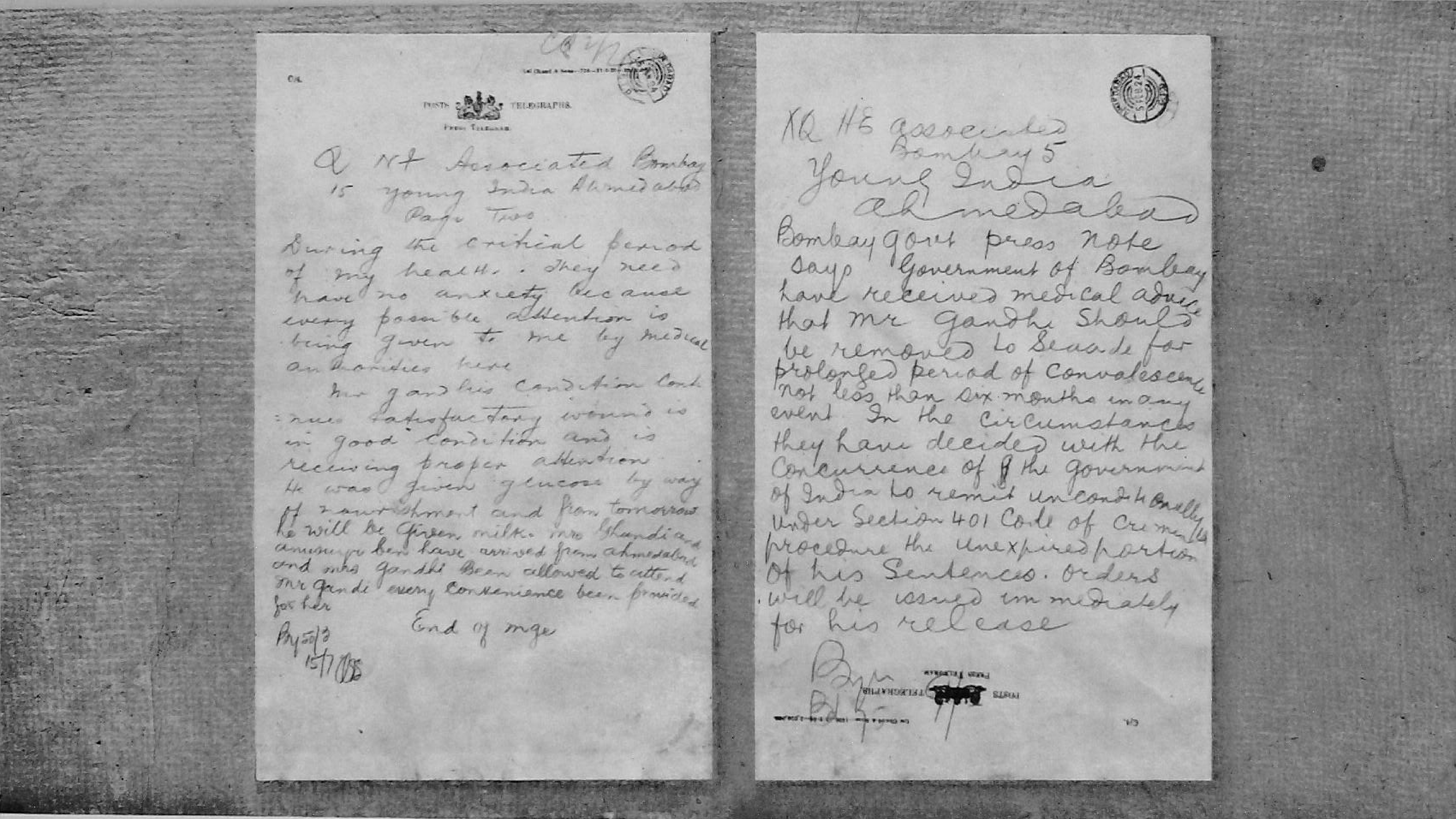
Copies to :-

The Sessions Judge, Ahmedabad,
The District Magistrate, Poona,
The Inspector General of Police, Bombay Presidency,
The District Superintendent of Police, Poona,
The Personal Assistant to the Deputy Inspector General of Police, C.I.D., Poona,
The Commissioner, Central Division,
The Surgeon General with the Government of Bombay.
The Private Secretary to His Excellency the Governor of Bombay.

5/2
Warrant to be returned to Court

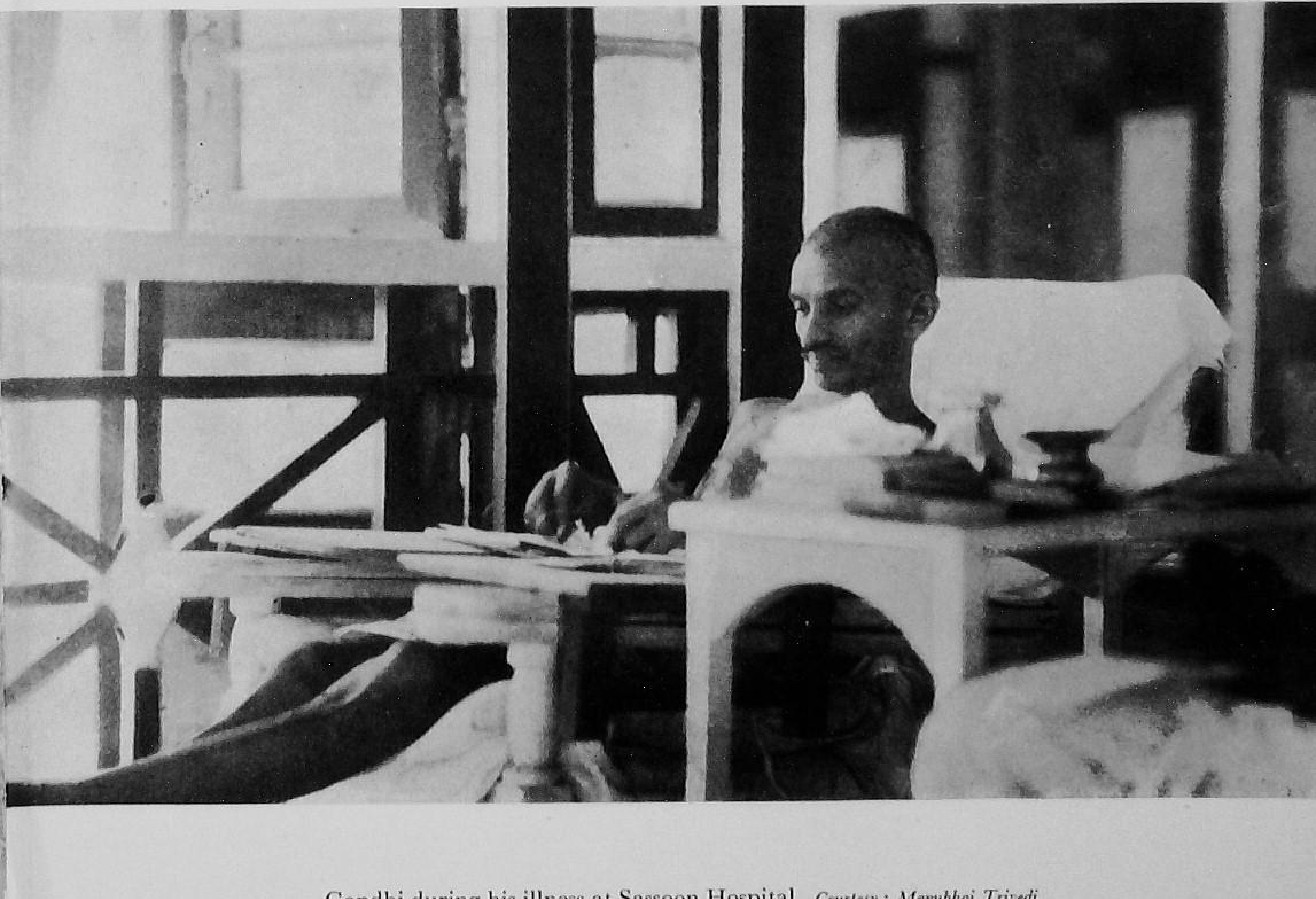
*Courtesy: Sessions Judge, Ahmedabad*

Gandhi's release order, February 4, 1924



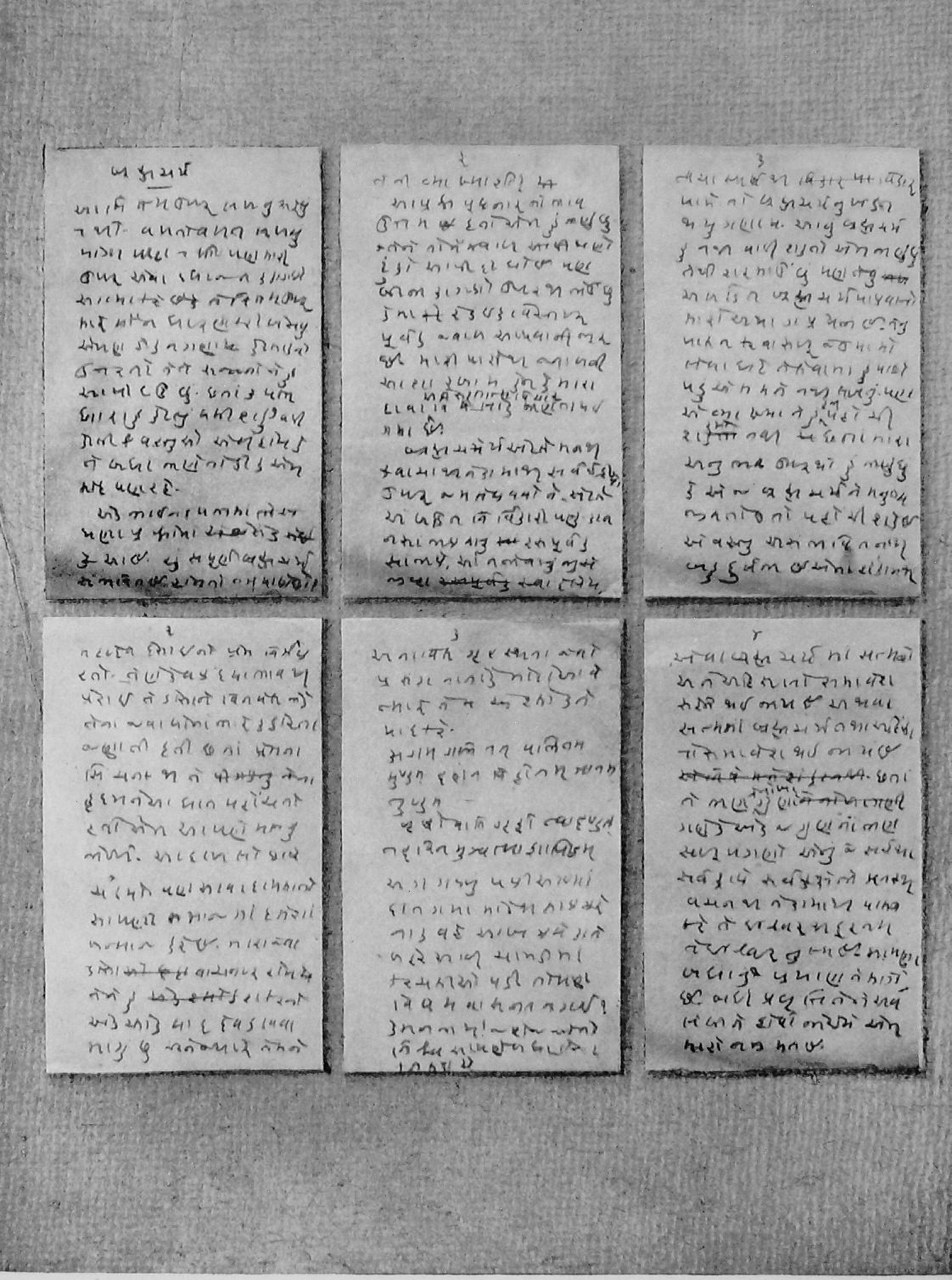

Courtesy: Girdhari Kripalani

Press messages during Gandhi's illness, January-February, 1924



Gandhi during his illness at Sassoon Hospital *Courtesy: Manubhai Trivedi*

Convalescing at "Palm Bun", Juhu, March-May, 1924 *From Sumati Morarjee Collection*



*Courtesy : Girdhari Kripalani*

Gandhi's manuscript of his articles on *brahmacharya*, May 1924

we be ruffled by such movements? Only they must be genuine. If the Malkanas wanted to return to the Hindu fold, they had a perfect right to do so, whenever they liked. But no propaganda can be allowed which reviles other religions. For, that would be negation of toleration. The best way of dealing with such propaganda is to publicly condemn it. Every movement attempts to put on the cloak of respectability. As soon as the public tear that cloak down, it dies for want of respectability.

"It is now time to examine the treatment of two constant causes of the Hindu-Muslim friction.

"The first is cow slaughter. Though I regard cow protection as the central fact of Hinduism, central because it is common to classes as well as masses, I have never been able to understand the antipathy towards the Musalmans on that score. We say nothing about the slaughter that daily takes place on behalf of Englishmen. Our anger becomes red-hot when a Musalman slaughters a cow. All the riots that have taken place in the name of the cow have been an insane waste of effort. They have not saved a single cow, but they have on the contrary stiffened the backs of the Musalmans and resulted in more slaughter. Cow protection should commence with ourselves. In no part of the world perhaps are cattle worse treated than in India. I have wept to see Hindu drivers goading their jaded oxen with the iron points of their cruel sticks. The half-starved condition of the majority of our cattle are a disgrace to us. The cows find their necks under the butcher's knife because Hindus sell them. The only effective and honourable way is to befriend the Musalmans and leave it to their honour to save the cow. Cow protection societies must turn their attention to the feeding of cattle, prevention of cruelty, preservation of the fast disappearing pasture, improving the breed of cattle, buying from poor shepherds and turning pinjrapoles into model self-supporting dairies. Hindus do sin against God and man when they omit to do any of the things I have described above. They commit no sin, if they cannot prevent cow slaughter at the hands of the Musalmans, and they do sin grievously when in order to save the cow, they quarrel with the Musalmans.

"The question of music before mosques, and now even *arati* in Hindu temples, has occupied my prayerful attention. This is a sore point with the Musalmans as cow slaughter is with the Hindus. And just as Hindus cannot compel Musalmans to refrain from killing

cows, so can Musalmans not compel Hindus to stop music or *arati* at the point of the sword. They must trust to the good sense of the Hindus. As a Hindu, I would certainly advise the Hindus, without any bargaining spirit, to consult the sentiment of their Musalman neighbours and wherever they can, accommodate them. I have heard that in some places, Hindus purposely and with the deliberate intention of irritating the Musalmans, perform *arati* just when the Musalman prayers commence. This is an insensate and unfriendly act. Friendship presupposes the utmost attention to the feelings of a friend. It never requires consideration. But Musalmans should never expect to stop Hindu music by force. To yield to the threat or actual use of violence is a surrender of one's self-respect and religious conviction. But a person, who never will yield to threat, would always minimize and even avoid occasions for causing irritation.

"I am convinced that the masses do not want to fight, if the leaders do not. If, therefore, the leaders agree that mutual rows should be, as in all advanced countries, erased out of our public life as being barbarous and irreligious, I have no doubt that the masses will quickly follow them.

"Hindus if they want unity among different races must have the courage to trust the minorities. Any other adjustment must leave a nasty taste in the mouth. Surely the millions do not want to become legislators and municipal councillors. And if we have understood the proper use of satyagraha, we should know that it can be and should be used against an unjust administrator whether he be a Hindu, Musalman or of any other race or denomination, whereas a just administrator or representative is always and equally good whether he be a Hindu or Musalman. We want to do away with the communal spirit. The majority must, therefore, make the beginning and thus inspire the minorities with confidence in their bona fides. Adjustment is possible only when the more powerful party take the initiative without waiting for response from the weaker.

"So far as the employment in the Government departments is concerned, I think it will be fatal to any good government, if we introduce there the communal spirit. For administration to be efficient, it must always be in the hands of the fittest. There should be certainly no favouritism. But if we want five engineers we must not take one from each community but we must take the fittest five even if they were all Musalmans or Parsis. The lowest posts must

if need be, be filled by examination by an impartial board consisting of men belonging to different communities. But distribution of posts should never be according to the proportion of the numbers of each community. The educationally backward communities will have a right to receive favoured treatment in the matter of education at the hands of the national government. This can be secured in an effective manner. But those who aspire to occupy responsible posts in the government of the country, can only do so if they pass the required test.

"For me the only question for immediate solution before the country is the Hindu-Musalman question. I agree with Mr. Jinnah that Hindu-Muslim unity means swaraj. I see no way of achieving anything in this afflicted country without a lasting heart unity between Hindus and Musalmans of India. I believe in the immediate possibility of achieving it, because it is so natural, so necessary for both, and because I believe in human nature. Musalmans may have much to answer for. I have come in closest touch with even what may be considered a 'bad lot'. I cannot recall a single occasion when I had to regret it. Musalmans are brave, they are generous and trusting, the moment their suspicion is disarmed. Hindus living as they do in glass-houses have no right to throw stones at their Musalman neighbours. See what we have done, are still doing, to the suppressed classes!

"God does not punish directly. His ways are inscrutable. Who knows that all our woes are not due to that one black sin? The history of Islam, if it betrays aberrations from the moral height, has many a brilliant page. In its glorious days it was not intolerant. It commanded the admiration of the world. When the West was sunk in darkness a bright star rose in the eastern firmament and gave light and comfort to a groaning world. Islam is not a false religion. Let Hindus study it reverently, and they will love it as I do. If it has become gross and fanatical here, let us admit that we have had no small share in making it so. If Hindus set their house in order, I have not a shadow of doubt that Islam will respond in a manner worthy of its past liberal traditions. The key to the situation lies with the Hindus. We must shed timidity or cowardice. We must be brave enough to trust, and all will be well."

After having discussed the Hindu-Muslim tension, Gandhi left for Sabarmati on May 28.

## *Defeated And Humbled*

1924

THE WORK of the Swarajists, led as they were by Das and Motilal Nehru, was creditable and they achieved whatever was possible under the limited constitution. The prominent Congressmen all over the country became presidents of municipalities. Das became the first Mayor of Calcutta, Vithalbhai Patel, President of the Bombay Corporation, Vallabhbhai Patel of the Ahmedabad Municipality, Rajendra Prasad of Patna Municipality, and Jawaharlal Nehru of Allahabad Municipality. The Poona Municipality in defiance of the Government's order decided to erect Tilak's statue in the municipal market. The Bombay Corporation and the Ahmedabad Municipality presented addresses to Gandhi. In Karachi, Bombay and Calcutta, the presidents of the municipalities declined to attend state functions in honour of the Viceroy. All over India, the municipalities acted spiritedly and came in conflict with the Government authorities. But the work in the councils and the municipalities brought no concrete results but some heart-burning among the communities. There was an air of frustration in the country and the people looked again to Gandhi for a lead.

On June 19, 1924 Gandhi unfolded his plan in *Young India*:

"I propose to move at the forthcoming meeting of the All-India Congress Committee the following four resolutions:

"1. In view of the fact that the members of the Congress organizations throughout the country have themselves hitherto neglected hand-spinning, in spite of the fact that the spinning wheel and its product hand-spun khaddar have been regarded as indispensable for the establishment of swaraj and although their acceptance has been regarded by the Congress as a necessary preliminary to civil disobedience, the A.-I.C.C. resolves that all the members of the various representative Congress organizations shall, except when disabled by sickness or prevented by continuous travelling, regularly

spin at least half an hour every day and shall send to the secretary of the All-India Khadi Board at least ten tolas each of even, well-twisted yarn of a count not below ten, so as to reach him not later than the fifteenth day of each month, the first consignment to reach the secretary not later than the fifteenth day of August 1924, and thereafter in regular monthly succession. Any member failing to send the prescribed quantity by the prescribed date shall be deemed to have vacated his office and such vacancy shall be filled in the usual manner; provided that the member vacating in the manner aforesaid shall not be eligible for re-election before the next general election for the members of the several organizations.

"2. Inasmuch as complaints have been received that provincial secretaries and other members of the Congress organizations do not carry out the instructions issued to them from time to time by officers duly authorized thereto, the A.-I.C.C. hereby resolves that those in charge of matters referred to them failing to comply with the instructions of officers thereto appointed shall be deemed to have vacated their offices and the vacancy shall be filled in the usual manner; provided that the member thus vacating shall not be eligible for re-election till the next general election.

"3. In the opinion of the A.-I.C.C. it is desirable that the Congress electors elect to various offices in the Congress organization only those who in their persons carry out to the full the Congress creed and the various non-co-operation resolutions of the Congress including the five boycotts, namely, of all mill-spun cloth, government law courts, schools, titles and legislative bodies; and the A.-I.C.C. hereby resolves that the members who do not believe in and do not in their own persons carry out the said boycotts shall vacate their seats and that there should be fresh elections in respect of such seats; provided that if the members vacating so choose, they may offer themselves for re-election.

"4. The A.-I.C.C. regrets the murder of the late Mr. Day by the late Gopinath Saha and offers its condolences to the deceased's family; and though deeply sensible of the love, however misguided, of the country prompting Mr. Day's murder, the A.-I.C.C. strongly condemns this and all such political murders and is emphatically of opinion that all such acts are inconsistent with the Congress creed and its resolution of non-violent non-co-operation; and is of opinion that such acts retard the progress towards swaraj, and interfere with

the preparations for civil disobedience which in the opinion of the A.-I.C.C. is capable of evoking the purest sacrifice but which can only be offered in a perfectly peaceful atmosphere."

Gandhi knew that these resolutions would lead to division among Congressmen and sharp controversy, but he was bent upon clearing the air of uncertainty. "Some discussion is inevitable if we are to know where we are. I am supposed to work wonders, lead the nation to its predestined goal. Fortunately for me, I entertain no such hallucinations. But I do claim to be a humble soldier. If the reader will not laugh at me, I do not mind telling him that I can become also an efficient general on usual terms. I must have soldiers who would obey and who have faith in themselves and in their general and who will willingly carry out instructions. My plan of action is always open and very definite. Certain well-defined conditions being fulfilled, it guarantees success. But what is a poor general to do when he finds soldiers who subscribe to his conditions and yet do not carry them out in their own persons and, may be, do not even believe in them? The resolutions are designed to test the qualifications of the soldiers."

In firm tone he said: "The soldiers are in the happy position of being electors of their own general. The would-be general must know the conditions of employment. I remain where I stood in 1920. Only my faith has increased with the years that have gone by. If such is also the case with my employers, I am theirs body and soul. I have no faith in any other plan. I am, therefore, not available on any other terms, not because I am unwilling but because I am unfit. How would it do if in answer to an advertisement for a red-haired young man of thirty-five, measuring six feet and six inches, a grey-haired old toothless man of fifty-five, broken down in health offered his services?

"All the four resolutions then constitute my application for my employment as general and lay down my qualifications and limitations. Here there is no imposition of autocracy, and no impossible demand. The members if they are true to the country and themselves will not spare me if they find me to be in the wrong. I hold no man to be indispensable for the welfare of the country. No past services, however brilliant, should be counted in distributing present employments. The country's good may not be sacrificed to one man or one hundred men. Rather should he or they be sacrificed to the welfare

of the country. I invite the members of the A.-I.C.C. to approach their task with a determined purpose without bias, without false emotion or sentiment. I adjure them not to take me on trust. Nothing need be right because I say so. They must decide for themselves. They must know by this time that I am a difficult companion and a hard taskmaster. They will now find me harder than before."

In the next issue of *Young India*, on the eve of the session of the A.-I.C.C., Gandhi issued an appeal:

"The Congress took a resolution in 1920 that was designed to attain Swaraj in one year. At the end of that year we were within an ace of getting it. But because we failed to get it then, we may not now regard it as indefinitely postponed. On the contrary we must retain the same attitude of hopefulness as before. Above all we must be determined to get swaraj soon, sooner than the chilly atmosphere around us will warrant.

"It is in that spirit that I have framed the resolutions for submission to you. They have been before the country now for a week. I have read some of the criticism directed against them. I believe I am open to conviction. But the criticism has not altered it. I have no axes to grind, or the only axe I have to grind is that which will enable us to strike at the very root of every impediment in our way.

"I believe in khaddar, I believe in the spinning wheel. It has two aspects, terrible and benign. In its terrible aspect it is calculated to bring about the only boycott we need for independent national existence, namely, that of the foreign cloth. It alone can kill the demoralizing British self-interest. In its benign aspect it gives a new life and hope to the villager. It can fill millions of hungry mouths. It alone can bring us in touch and in tune with the villagers. It is the very best popular education that is needed for the millions. It is life-giving. I would not hesitate to turn the Congress into an exclusively khaddar-producing and khaddar propaganda organization till the attainment of swaraj, just as I would not hesitate, if I believed in the use of arms and giving violent battle to England, to make the Congress an organization exclusively devoted to training the nation in the use of arms. To be truly national the Congress must devote itself exclusively to that which will bring the nation most quickly within reach of swaraj. Because I believe in the potency of khaddar to give swaraj, I have given it the foremost place in our

programme. You will not hesitate summarily to reject it, if you do not share my belief.

"The five boycotts are vital for the Congress. They are vital for swaraj for the masses. Such a big question cannot be decided merely by a show of hands, it cannot be decided even by argument. It must be decided by each one of us by ringing for the still small voice within. Each one of us must retire to his closet and ask God to give a definite guidance. This battle for freedom is no play for you and me. It is the most serious thing in our lives. If, therefore, the programme sketched by me does not commend itself to you, you must summarily reject it, cost what it may."

The A.-I.C.C. met at Ahmedabad on June 27. The resolutions submitted by Gandhi were accepted by the Working Committee but they were strongly opposed by the Swarajists, in the three-day session. A very sharp controversy arose between Gandhi and the Swarajists. Gandhi proposed a fundamental alteration in the Congress constitution, changing the franchise and rules of membership. So far, every one who subscribed to the first article of the Congress constitution, which laid down the objective of swaraj and peaceful methods, and paid four annas could become a member. He now wanted to limit membership to those who gave a certain amount of self-spun yarn instead of the four annas. The A.-I.C.C. was not competent to do this but he did not care for the letter of the constitution.

Motilal Nehru characterized Gandhi's action as autocratic. He considered the resolutions about Congress reorganization as *ultra vires*. The majority, however, negatived the point of order raised by Nehru and Das. Next day when Gandhi moved his resolution, Nehru read a statement and after that the Swarajists led by Nehru, Das and Srinivas Iyengar left the meeting. In their absence the resolution was passed but Gandhi proposed to have the penalty clause rescinded, which was accepted.

After this, the Swarajists had a consultation with Gandhi and they attended the meeting. His resolution about the five boycotts of mill cloth, law courts, schools and colleges, titles and legislative bodies was also modified by him. But he moved the resolution relating to Gopinath Saha, a terrorist, without any alteration. It was passed by a majority of eight votes only. The resolution was not to Das' taste and there occurred a battle royal. Gandhi was

sorely disappointed to find some of his closest colleagues voting against the resolution, and he shed tears in public.

The stormy discussions in the A.-I.C.C. wrung out from Gandhi's pen two articles in *Young India*. His comment on the modified resolutions revealed his innermost feelings:

"The first resolution is bereft of the penalty clause. It was my first defeat in a series. Majorities cannot deceive me. It was impossible for me to be satisfied with a bare majority when I knew that if the Swarajist withdrawals were to be taken into account the defeat was a certainty. I, therefore, urged the meeting to take into account the withdrawals and remove the penalty clause from the resolution.

"The second resolution is not the same as the original draft, but in substance it is almost the same. The principle of disciplinary action is retained.

"The third resolution constitutes real failure. I still feel that the elective organizations of the Congress are executive and that, therefore, they should contain only those who heartily support the Congress programme for the time being and who are prepared not to obstruct or tone it down, but to carry it out in its entirety. But it was not possible to get over the constitutional difficulty. Any restriction upon the Cocanada programme must be considered a breach of the Congress constitution. Putting the interpretation that I do even now, the original resolution was not a breach. But it was pointed out to me that I have no right to put my own interpretation upon it and that the Swarajists had the right to contend that those who entered the councils were not debarred from being on the executives. They said that there were Swarajists on the Working Committee already. The argument had great weight with me, and in view of the knowledge that the original resolution disqualifying the Swarajists from being on the executives could only be passed by a narrow majority, was decisive in reconciling me to the resolution as finally adopted. It does not please me. But it was the only course left, save that of dropping the whole proposition. That was required for the sake of keeping before the country the idea of having a homogeneous organization and of insisting on the purity of political conduct. Representatives must be expected to conform to the standards they lay for others. It must be pointed out in a variety of ways that the Congress is no longer a begging association but that it is primarily a self-purification association

designed to achieve its goal by developing internal strength. Public opinion must be created in favour of the things needed for the national life. The best way of creating it is to frame propositions and enlisting support therefor. Whilst, therefore, I have reconciled myself to the possibility of temporary heterogeneity I would strongly plead with both the parties not to obstruct each other's path.

"The fourth resolution, however, completed my defeat. It is true that the Gopinath resolution was carried by a bare majority. A clear minority would have pleased me more than a narrow majority. I do not forget the fact that many who voted for Mr. Das' amendment did so because of the rumour of impending arrests. Many naturally felt it a point of honour to protect a valued chief and comrade who had rendered signal services to the country and who had performed great self-sacrifice. Sentiment often outweighs moral considerations, and I have no doubt that the Bengal Government will make a serious blunder if they arrest Mr. Das and his supporters. It is too late in the day to punish opinions. If there was no moral consideration against supporting Mr. Das' amendment, I would have had no hesitation whatsoever in myself tendering my support. But I could not, no Congressman could. Mr. Das sees no difference between my resolution and his. I can call it self-deception. Those who spoke in support of his proposition did not mince matters. They had room for political murder in their philosophy and after all is it not a common philosophy? The majority of the so-called civilized peoples believe in and act upon it on due occasions. They hold that for a disorganized and oppressed people political assassination is the only remedy. That it is a false philosophy, that it has failed to make the world better to live in, is only true. I merely state that if Mr. Das and his supporters have erred, they have the bulk of 'civilized' opinion on their side. The foreign masters of India have no better record to show. If the Congress was a political organization with no limitation as to means, it would be impossible to object to Mr. Das' amendment on merits. It would then be reduced to a question of expedience. . ."

Gandhi did not consider the majority on his side as his triumph. On July 3, in *Young India*, he declared himself as "Defeated and Humbled":

"The proceedings of the A.-I.C.C. reminded me of those at Delhi just before I was imprisoned. The disillusionment of Delhi awaited

me at Ahmedabad. I had a bare majority always for the four resolutions. But it must be regarded by me as a minority. The house was fairly evenly divided. The Gopinath Saha resolution clinched the issue. The speeches, the result and the scenes I witnessed after, was a perfect eye-opener. I undoubtedly regard the voting, as a triumph for Mr. Das, although he was apparently defeated by eight votes. That he could find 70 supporters out of 148 who voted, had a deep significance for me. It lighted the darkness, though dimly as yet.

"Up to the point of the declaration of the poll, I was enjoying the whole thing as a huge joke, though I knew all the while that it was as serious as it was huge. I now see that my enjoyment was superficial. It concealed the laceration that was going on within.

"After the declaration, the chief actors retired from the scene. And the house abandoned itself to levity. Most important resolutions were passed with the greatest unconcern. There were flashes of humour sandwitched in between these resolutions. Everybody rose on points of order and information. The ordeal was enough to try the patience of any chairman. Maulana Mahomed Ali came through it all unscathed. He kept his temper fairly. He rightly refused to recognize 'points of information'. I must confess that the suitors for fame most cheerfully obeyed his summary rulings. . .

"All the same, dignity vanished after the Gopinath resolution. It was before this house that I had to put my last resolution. As the proceedings went on I must have become more and more serious. Often I felt like running away from the oppressive scene. I dreaded having to move a resolution in my charge. I would have asked for postponement of the resolution but for the promise I had made the meeting that I would suggest a remedy, or failing that, move a resolution for protecting litigants from the operation of the third resolution which requests resignation from members who do not believe in the principle of the five boycotts including that of law courts and do not carry them out in their own persons. Protection was intended for those who might be driven to the courts either as plaintiffs or defendants. The resolution that was adopted by the Working Committee and previously circulated among the members did protect them. It was substituted by the one actually passed by the A.-I.C.C. As the reader knows it exempts from its operation those who might be covered by the Cocanada resolution. In drafting that amendment I had not protected litigants. I had wished to do

so by a separate resolution. I had announced the fact at the time of introducing the resolution. And it was this promised resolution that opened for me a way out of 'darkness invisible'. I moved it with the preface that it was in redemption of the morning promise. I mentioned Gangadharrao Deshpande was an instance in point. I do not believe in exemptions and as-far-as-possibles. But I know that some of the strongest non-co-operators have found it difficult to avoid courts. Unscrupulous debtors have refused payment to non-co-operators because of their knowledge that the latter could not sue them. Similarly, I know men who have brought suits against non-co-operators, because they would not defend themselves. The curious will be agreeably surprised to discover, if they searched among the rank and file, numerous cases in which non-co-operators have preferred to suffer great losses to defending themselves or suing. Nevertheless it is perfectly true that representatives have not always been able to keep to the prohibition. The practice has been to wink at filing suits and more often at defending them. The committee has from time to time also passed rules legalizing the practice to a certain extent. I thought that now when the A.-I.C.C. was adopting a rigid attitude regarding the observance of boycotts, the position of the litigants should be very clearly defined. Nothing would please me better than for the Congress to have only those representatives on its executive who would carry out all the boycotts to the full. But the exact fulfilment at the present stage of the boycott of law courts on the part of many is almost an impossibility. Voluntary acceptance of poverty is essential for the purpose. It must take some time before we can hope to man the Congress organization with such men and women, and run them efficiently. Recognizing the hard fact, I was prepared to incur the odium of having to move the resolution of exemption. Hardly had I finished reading it, up sprang the brave Harisarvottam Rao to his feet and in a vigorous and cogent speech opposed it. He said it was his painful duty to oppose me. I told him the pain was mine in that I had to move a resolution I could not defend. His must be the pleasure of opposing an indefensible resolution and of keeping the Congress organization pure at any cost. I liked this opposition and was looking forward to the voting. But the opposer was followed by Swami Govindanand who raised the technical objection that no resolution designed to affect one previously passed could be moved at the same session of

the committee. The chairman properly rejected the objection, if only because the previous day the very first resolution was amended after it was passed by a majority. But the last straw was unwittingly supplied by Dr. Choithram. I have known him to be a responsible man. A long period of unbroken service lies to his credit. He has embraced poverty for the sake of his country. I was not prepared for constitutional objection from him in a matter in which the committee had on previous occasions softened the effect of the boycott resolution. But he thoughtlessly asked whether my resolution was not in breach of the Congress resolution on boycotts. Maulana Mahomed Ali asked me whether the objection was not just. I said, of course, it was. He, therefore, felt bound to hold my resolution unconstitutional. Then I sank within me. There was nothing, absolutely nothing, wrong about anybody's speech or behaviour. All were brief in their remarks. They were equally courteous. What is more they were seemingly in the right. And yet it was all hopelessly unreal. The objections were like reading a sermon on the virtue of self-restraint to a hungry man reduced to a skeleton. Each of the actors acted involuntarily, unconsciously. I felt that God was speaking to me through them and seemed to say, 'Thou fool, knowest not thou that thou art impossible? Thy time is up.' Gangadharrao asked me whether he should not resign. I agreed with him that he should do so at once. And he promptly tendered his resignation. The president read it to the meeting. It was accepted almost unanimously. Gangadharrao was the gainer.

"Shaukat Ali was sitting right opposite at a distance of perhaps six yards. His presence restrained me from fleeing. I kept asking myself, 'Could right ever come out of wrong? Was I not co-operating with evil?' Shaukat Ali seemed to say to me through his big eyes, 'There is nothing wrong, for all will be right.' I was struggling to free myself from the enchantment. I could not.

"The president asked, 'Shall I now dissolve the meeting?' I said 'Certainly.' But Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who was evidently watching whatever changes my face was undergoing, was all eyes. He quickly came up and said, 'We cannot disperse without the message you have promised.' I replied, 'Maulana Saheb, it is true I wanted to say something about the future plans. But what I have been witnessing for the last hour after the Gopinath resolution, has grieved me. I do not know where I stand now and what I should do.'

'Then,' he said, 'say even if it is only that.' I complied and in a short speech in Hindustani laid bare my heart and let them see the blood oozing out of it. It takes much to make me weep. I try to suppress tears even when there is occasion for them. But in spite of all my efforts to be brave, I broke down utterly. The audience was visibly affected. I took them through the various stages I had passed and told them that it was Shaukat Ali who stood in the way of my flight. For I regarded him as trustee for Hindu honour, as I was proud enough to regard myself as such for Musalman honour. And then I told them that I was unable to say how I would shape my future course. I would consult him and other workers who were closely associated with me. It was the saddest speech I had ever made. I finished and turned round to look for Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. He had stolen away from me and was standing at the farthest end opposite to me. I told him I would now like to go. He said, 'Not yet for a while. For we must speak too.' He invited the audience to speak. Those who spoke did so with a sob. The sight of the hoary-headed Sikh friend who was choked as he was speaking touched me deep. Of course Shaukat Ali spoke and others. All begged pardon and assured me of their unwavering support. Mahomed Ali broke down twice. I tried to soothe him.

"I had nothing to forgive, for none had done any wrong to me. On the contrary they had all been personally kind to me. I was sad because we weighed in the scales of our own making—the Congress creed—and found wanting; we were such poor representatives of the nation. I seemed to be hopelessly out of place. My grief consisted in the doubt about my own ability to lead those who would not follow.

"I saw that I was utterly defeated and humbled. But defeat cannot dishearten me. It can only chasten me. My faith in my creed stands immovable. I know that God will guide me. Truth is superior to man's wisdom."

The foregoing was written on Monday, June 30, but he was not satisfied: "On reading it I feel I have not done justice to the meeting or myself." He wrote a postcript:

"Great as the informal meeting was, the one that preceded it and that stung me to the quick, was not less great. I do not know that I have made it clear that no speaker had any malice in him. What preyed upon my mind was the fact of unconscious irresponsibility and disregard of the Congress creed or policy of non-violence.

"The informal meeting was a heart-searcher. It purified the atmosphere. The whole of Tuesday I passed in discussing with co-workers my position. My innermost wish was and still is to retire from the Congress and confine my activity merely to the Hindu-Muslim unity, khaddar and untouchability. They would not listen. I had no right, they said, to retire at a critical period in the history of the nation. My withdrawal would not smooth matters. It would cause depression and remove from Congress meetings an active restraining influence. I must actively work the programme of which I was the author, so long as the majority favoured it. The programme had a far greater majority than the voting at the A.-I.C.C. would indicate. I must travel in the country and see things for myself. My second proposal was for all who fully accepted the Congress creed to retire in favour of the Swarajists. As the argument against it developed I rejected it myself as thoughtless. It was the last thing the Swarajists wanted. I felt that it would be doing violence to them to expect them to do the impossible. I know that they would not entertain even the first proposal. I offered it to them at Juhu and renewed it in Ahmedabad. I have, therefore, reluctantly decided to drink the bitter cup and continue to be in the Congress organization and shoulder the responsibility for working it, until the Congress puts me in an actual numerical minority.

"I may not choose short cuts. I must plod. I must pocket my pride and wait till I am driven out. I must seemingly become a party man and show that I can still work as a no-party man. I must strive for a majority at the next Congress and endeavour, so far as it is possible, to act impartially. It is not beyond the capacity of a satyagrahi...

"The two methods represent two opposite mentalities. This is not to say that one is wrong if the other is right. Each may be right in its own place. But for one organization to work both is to weaken both and to damage the national cause. Whilst one school claims to give political education through the councils, the other school claims to give it exclusively by working among the people and evoking its organizing and administrative capacity. One teaches to look up to a government for popular progress, the other tries to show that even the most ideal government plays among a self-governing people the least important part in national growth. One teaches the people that the constructive programme alone cannot

achieve swaraj, the other teaches the people that it and it alone can achieve it.

"Unfortunately, I was unable to convince the Swarajists of this obvious truth. And I saw constitutional difficulty in the way of securing a homogeneous organization. We must now, therefore, do the next best thing. We must silently work up the constructive programme without regard to what will happen in December, in the full belief that whether the Congress rejects or accepts the programme, for us there is no other."

Of all the resolutions passed at the A.-I.C.C., he considered the one on spinning the most important: "There is an inclination to laugh at it . . . Even if the economic value of khaddar be admitted, it will be found on experience that the resolution was necessary to bring about an economic revolution. Those who voted for the resolution are in honour bound to carry it out. But now that the penalty clause is out, I hope that even the objectors will comply with the resolution. Its possibilities are immense. Apart from any other consideration is this labour not worth taking for the sake of the poor? Imagine the effect of such work on the poor! The knowledge of Congressmen working for them must fill them with a new hope."

Regarding the boycott of councils, Gandhi was not dogmatic like the no-changers. After the A.-I.C.C. session Gandhi told Motilal Nehru that it would be disastrous if the Swarajists retired from the councils at that stage. Nehru was surprised and referred to what he wrote and said before. To Gandhi, it was no contradiction: "The one statement is permanent and based upon principle, the other is applicable to the immediate present and is based on expedience. There is no doubt that the Swarajists have created a stir in the Government circles. There is no doubt that any withdrawal at the present moment will be misunderstood as a rout and weakness." Gandhi did not want their withdrawal at this juncture because it would add to the depression prevailing in the country at that time, and strengthen the hands of the Government. The opportune time for the Swarajists to come out was according to him when "the whole-hoggers have become active workers of our programme, which we consider to be the only one that can bring us swaraj." He also wanted the Swarajists to learn by bitter experience that the councils "can only give condiments but no bread" and, therefore, they should give their whole time and attention to the constructive work.

He was criticized by a section of the so-called followers of Tilak. In a tribute to the memory of Tilak, on his fourth death anniversary, Gandhi observed: "The task is difficult. Just as, on that memorable night in 1920, I returned from Sardar Griha after having had a last look at the remains as they lay in the death chamber. I felt an oppressive loneliness. I was secure in the Lokamanya's presence. But by his departure, I felt hopelessly insecure. I could differ from him and express my difference in respectful terms, but we could never misunderstand each other. I could not feel so with his followers, not because they would want to distrust me but because being without a guide, whose word was law to them, they would always feel insecure and hesitant about my views, and not in a perfect agreement among themselves. Division in their ranks was the last thing in the world I desired. I have more than once expressed my admiration for the Maharashtra party. It has a determined policy. It is well drilled. It is able. It has a record of great sacrifice behind it. I wanted and want still to capture, not to divide the party. I wanted and still want to convert it to my view of the means for the attainment of swaraj. With Lokamanya alive, I had only him to convert or to be converted by him. He had an instinctive perception of things and situations. As he once said to me, 'If the people follow your method, I am yours.' I can deserve the heritage left by him only by being true to myself."

Between the Swarajists and no-changers, between Congressmen and Liberals, between Hindus and Muslims, between Brahmins and non-Brahmins, the dividing line was widening. Gandhi was determined to stop the rot and unify all schools of thought. His first pronouncement in this direction was made at the Excelsior Theatre in Bombay on August 31. "There was no reason," he said, "why we could not find a common denominator of action. There must be some things on which we could all meet under the same roof." He, therefore, proposed a "lowest common measure". He was willing to suspend the non-co-operation, at least the more militant aspect of it, and proposed concentration of the Congress on hand-spinning, Hindu-Muslim unity and removal of untouchability. He wrote in *Young India* dated September 11:

"Our non-co-operation has taken the form of non-co-operation in practice with one another instead of with the Government. Without wishing it we are weakening one another and to that extent helping

the system we are seeking to destroy. Our non-co-operation was meant to be a living, active, non-violent force matched against the essential violence of the system. Unfortunately the non-co-operation never became actively non-violent. We satisfied ourselves with the physical non-violence of the weak and helpless. Having failed to produce the immediate effect of destroying the system, it has recoiled upon us with double strength and now bids fair to destroy us, if we do not take care betimes. I, for one, am determined not to participate in the domestic wrangle but would even invite all concerned to do likewise. If we cannot actively help, we must not hinder. I am just as keen a believer as ever in the five boycotts. But I clearly see, as I did not at the time of the A.-I.C.C. meeting, that whilst we maintain them in our persons, there is no atmosphere for working them. There is too much distrust in the air. Every action is suspected and misinterpreted. And whilst we carry on a war of explanation and counter-explanation, the enemy at the door is rejoicing and consolidating his forces. I have, therefore, suggested that we should find out the lowest common measure among all the political parties and invite them all to co-operate on the Congress platform for achieving that common measure. This is the work of internal development without which there will be no effective external political pressure . . . The Congress must progressively represent the masses. They are as yet untouched by the politics . . . We must share their sorrows, understand their difficulties and anticipate their wants."

His sincerity was infectious. His bitterest opponent, Mrs. Besant, stated through *Young India*: "I am prepared to endorse the three proposals of Mr. Gandhi for the Congress programme, and I will rejoin the Congress when those in authority also accept them on behalf of the Congress."

Gandhi's name was suggested for the presidentship of the next Congress. In the complex situation as it prevailed then, many thought that he should be at the helm. "I still do not know where I stand," he said. "I am not going to preside for the purpose of division. I will accept the honour, if my acceptance serves the nation in any way. The fact is that I am tired of these divisions. I read *Faust* in the Yeravda jail for the second time. My first reading of it years ago left no impression on me. I could not catch Goethe's message. I do not know that I have even now. But

I may claim to have understood it somewhat. Margaret is sore at heart and troubled. She finds no relief from her misery save by going to the spinning wheel and to the music of the wheel, giving vent to her grief. I was much struck by the whole conception. Margaret is alone in her room torn within with doubt and despair. The poet sends her to her wheel lying in a corner in the room. The reader may be sure she had a well-chosen library of books, a few paintings and a copy of hand-written and illustrated Bible. She finds no solace either in the paintings or the books or, for Margaret, the book of books. She involuntarily goes to the wheel and finds peace in refusing to find it. Here are the noble lines:

> My peace is gone, and my heart is sore,
> I have lost him, and lost him, for evermore.
> The place, where he is not, to me is the tomb.
> The world is sadness and sorrow and gloom.
> My poor sick brain is crazed with pain;
> And my poor sick heart is torn in twain.
> My peace is gone and my heart is sore,
> For lost is my love for evermore.

"You may paraphrase them a little and the verses almost represent my condition. I seem to have lost my love too and distracted. I feel the abiding presence of my Lover and yet He seems to be away from me. For He refuses to guide me and give clear-cut injunctions. On the contrary, like Krishna, the arch mischief-maker to the Gopis, He exasperates me by appearing, disappearing and reappearing. When I see the light steadily before my eyes, I shall see my way clear and ask the reader to follow me.

"Meanwhile I can only take up the wheel or speak or write about it and commend it to the reader. In my loneliness, it is my only infallible friend and comforter."

## *Penance For Unity*

1924

Gandhi tried his best to ease the Hindu-Muslim tension. His writings and speeches were widely discussed but few seemed to have profited by them. A wave of riots swept over the country and within a short while desecration of Hindu temples by Muslims of Amethi, Sambhal and Gulbarga took place followed by fierce disturbances, and on the top of this came the terrible riots in September 1924 at Kohat, where 155 were killed and wounded and property worth nine lakh rupees destroyed. The entire Hindu population evacuated Kohat. The immediate cause of the trouble was the circulation of a pamphlet containing a virulently anti-Islamic poem.

Gandhi was upset: "The news from Kohat set the smouldering mass aflame. Something had got to be done. I passed two nights in restlessness and pain." On Wednesday, September 18, 1924, he imposed on himself a fast of twenty-one days. From Mahomed Ali's residence in Delhi, he issued a statement:

"The recent events have proved unbearable for me. My helplessness is still more unbearable. My religion teaches me that whenever there is distress which one cannot remove, one must fast and pray. I have done so in connection with my own dearest ones. Nothing evidently that I say or write can bring the two communities together. I am, therefore, imposing on myself a fast of twenty-one days commencing from today and ending on October 6. I reserve the liberty to drink water with or without salt. It is both a penance and prayer. As a penance I need not have taken the public into my confidence, but I publish the fast as, let me hope, an effective prayer both to Hindus and to Musalmans, who have hitherto worked in unison, not to commit suicide. I respectfully invite the heads of all the communities, including Englishmen, to meet and end this quarrel which is a disgrace to religion and to humanity. It seems as if God has been dethroned. Let us reinstate Him in our hearts."

Gandhi worked hard even while lying in bed. *Young India* dated September 25 was wholly written by him. He wrote on the second day of the fast on "God is One", quoting Goethe's *Faust* at length; on the fourth day he wrote on "Our Duty" to the aboriginal tribes; and on the sixth day he wrote an editorial, "No Work, No Vote", captivated by the formula in the Soviet constitution which was shown to him by Hasrat Mohani. The "medical tyrants" advised him to suspend the editorial responsibility. Before getting too weak, he wrote on September 22, "All about the Fast":

"I wish to assure the reader that the fast has not been undertaken without deliberation. As a matter of fact my life has been at stake ever since the birth of non-co-operation. I did not blindly embark upon it. I had ample warning of the dangers attendant upon it. No act of mine is done without prayer. Man is a fallible being. He can never be sure of his steps. What he may regard as answer to prayer may be an echo of his pride. For infallible guidance man has to have a perfectly innocent heart incapable of evil. I can lay no such claim. Mine is a struggling, striving, erring, imperfect soul. But I can rise only by experimenting upon myself and others. I believe in absolute oneness of God and, therefore, also of humanity. What though we have many bodies? We have but one soul. The rays of the sun are many through refraction. But they have the same source. I cannot, therefore, detach myself from the wickedest soul—nor may I be denied identity with the most virtuous. Whether, therefore, I will or no, I must involve in my experiment the whole of my kind. Nor can I do without experiment. Life is but an endless series of experiments.

"I knew that non-co-operation was a dangerous experiment. Non-co-operation in itself is unnatural, vicious and sinful. But non-violent non-co-operation, I am convinced, is a sacred duty at times. I have proved it in many cases. But there was every possibility of a mistake in its application to large masses. But desperate diseases call for desperate remedies. Non-violent non-co-operation was the only alternative to anarchy and worse. Since it was to be non-violent, I had to put my life in the scales.

"The fact that Hindus and Musalmans, who were only two years ago apparently working together as friends, are now fighting like cats and dogs in some places, shows conclusively that the non-co-operation they offered was not non-violent. I saw the symptoms in

Bombay, Chauri Chaura and in a host of minor cases. I did penance then. It had its effect *pro tanto*. But this Hindu-Muslim tension was unthinkable. It became unbearable on hearing of the Kohat tragedy. On the eve of my departure from Sabarmati for Delhi, Sarojini Devi wrote to me that speeches and homilies on peace would not do. I must find out an effective remedy. She was right in saddling the responsibility on me. Had I not been instrumental in bringing into being the vast energy of the people? I must find the remedy if the energy proved self-destructive. I wrote to say that I should find it only by plodding. Empty prayer is as 'sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal'. I little knew that the remedy was to be this prolonged fast. And yet I know that the fast is not prolonged enough for quenching the agony of my soul. Have I erred, have I been impatient, have I compromised with evil? I may have done all these things or none of them. All I know is what I see before me. If real non-violence and truth had been practised by the people who are now fighting, the gory duelling that is now going on would have been impossible. My responsibility is clearly somewhere.

"I was violently shaken by Amethi, Sambhal and Gulbarga. I had read the reports about Amethi and Sambhal prepared by Hindu and Musalman friends. I had learnt the joint finding of Hindu and Musalman friends who went to Gulbarga. I was writhing in deep pain and yet I had no remedy. The news of Kohat set the smouldering mass aflame. Something had got to be done. I passed two nights in restlessness and pain. On Wednesday I knew the remedy, I must do penance. In the Satyagraha Ashram at the time of morning prayer we ask Shiva, God of Mercy, to forgive our sins knowingly or unknowingly committed. My penance is the prayer of a bleeding heart for forgiveness for sins unwittingly committed.

"It is a warning to Hindus and Musalmans who have professed to love me. If they have loved me truly and if I have been deserving of their love, they will do penance with me for the grave sin of denying God in their hearts. To revile one another's religion, to make reckless statements, to utter untruth, to break the heads of innocent men, to desecrate temples or mosques, is a denial of God. The world is watching, some with glee and some with sorrow, the dog-fight that is proceeding in our midst. We have listened to Satan. Religion, call it by what name you like, is made of sterner stuff. The penance of Hindus and Musalmans is not fasting but retracing

their steps. It is true penance for a Musalman to harbour no ill for his Hindu brother and an equally true penance for a Hindu to harbour none for his Musalman brother.

"I ask of no Hindu or Musalman to surrender an iota of his religious principle. Only let him be sure that it is religion. But I do ask of every Hindu and Musalman not to fight for an earthly gain. I should be deeply hurt, if my fast made either community surrender on a matter of principle. My fast is a matter between God and myself.

"I did not consult friends—not even Hakim Saheb who was closeted with me for a long time on Wednesday—nor Mahomed Ali under whose roof I am enjoying the privilege of hospitality. When a man wants to make up with his Maker, he does not consult a third party. He ought not to. If he has any doubt about it, he certainly must. But I had no doubt in my mind about the necessity of my step. Friends would deem it their duty to prevent me from undertaking the fast. Such things are not matters for consultation or argument. They are matters of feeling. When Rama decided to fulfil his obligation, he did not swerve from his resolve either by the weepings and wailings of his mother or the advice of his preceptors, or the entreaty of his people, or even the certainty of his father's death if he carried out his resolve. These things are momentary. Hinduism would not have much been of a religion, if Rama had not steeled his heart against every temptation. He knew that he had to pass through every travail, if he was to serve humanity and become a model for future generations.

"But was it right for me to go through the fast under a Musalman roof? Yes, it was. The fast is not born out of ill will against a single soul. My being under a Musalman roof ensures it against any such interpretation. It is in the fitness of things that this fast should be taken up and completed in a Musalman house.

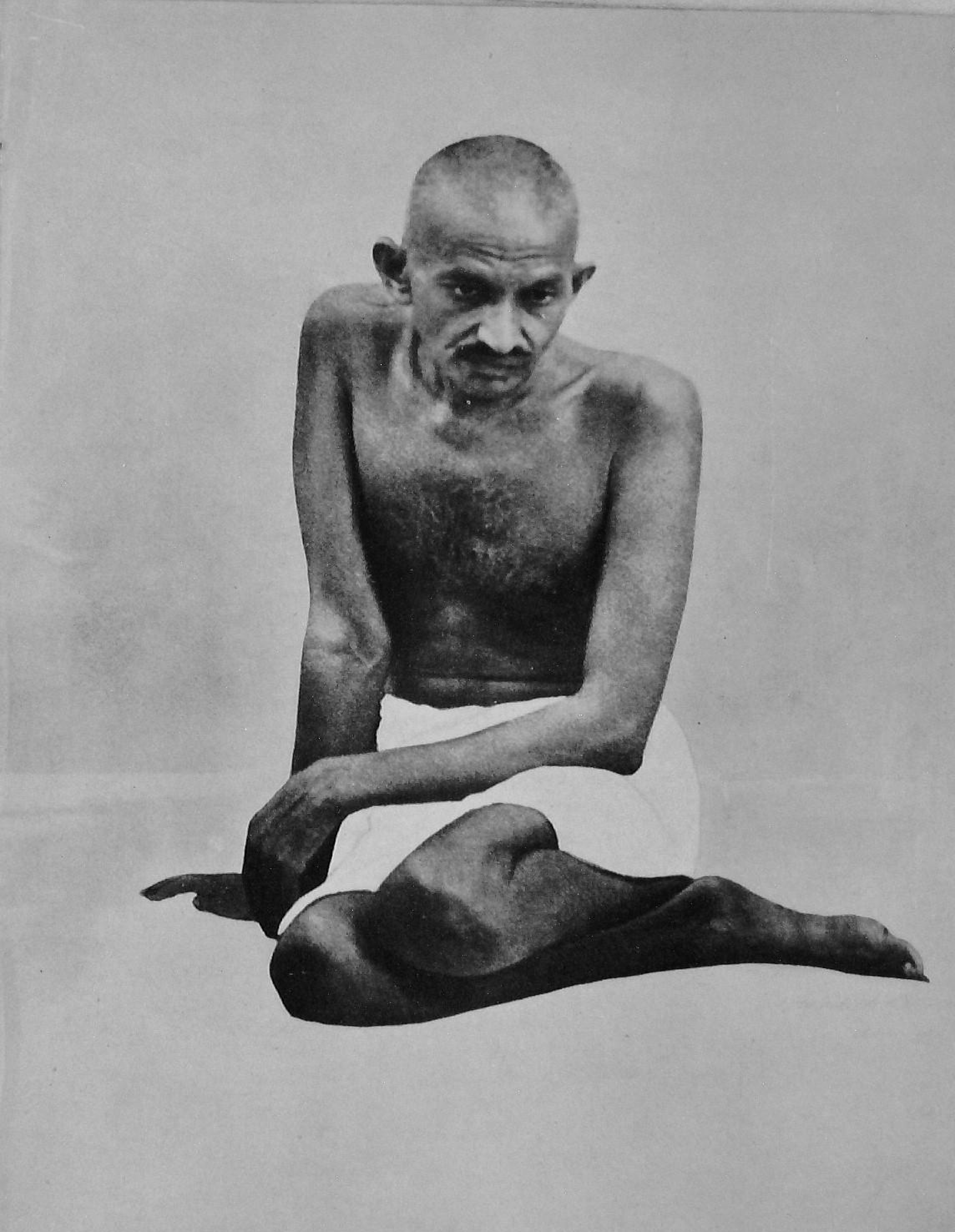
"And who is Mahomed Ali? Only two days before the fast we had a discussion about a private matter in which I told him, what was mine was his and what was his was mine. Let me gratefully tell the public that I have never received warmer or better treatment than under Mahomed Ali's roof. Every want of mine is anticipated. The dominant thought of every one of his household is to make me and mine happy and comfortable. Dr. Ansari and Dr. Rahman have constituted themselves my medical advisers. They examine me daily.

I have had many a happy occasion in my life. This is no less happy than the previous ones. Bread is not everything. I am experiencing here the richest love. It is more than bread for me.

"It has been whispered that by being so much with Musalman friends, I make myself unfit to know the Hindu mind. The Hindu mind is myself. Surely I do not need to live amidst Hindus to know the Hindu mind, when every fibre of my being is Hindu. My Hinduism must be a very poor thing, if it cannot flourish under influences the most adverse. I know instinctively what is necessary for Hinduism. But I must labour to discover the Musalman mind. The closer I come to the best of Musalmans, the juster I am likely to be in my estimate of the Musalmans and their doings. I am striving to become the best cement between the two communities. And my longing is to be able to cement the two with my blood, if necessary. But, before I can do so, I must prove to the Musalmans that I love them as well as I love the Hindus. My religion teaches me to love all equally. May God help me to do so. My fast is among other things meant to qualify me for achieving that equal and selfless love."

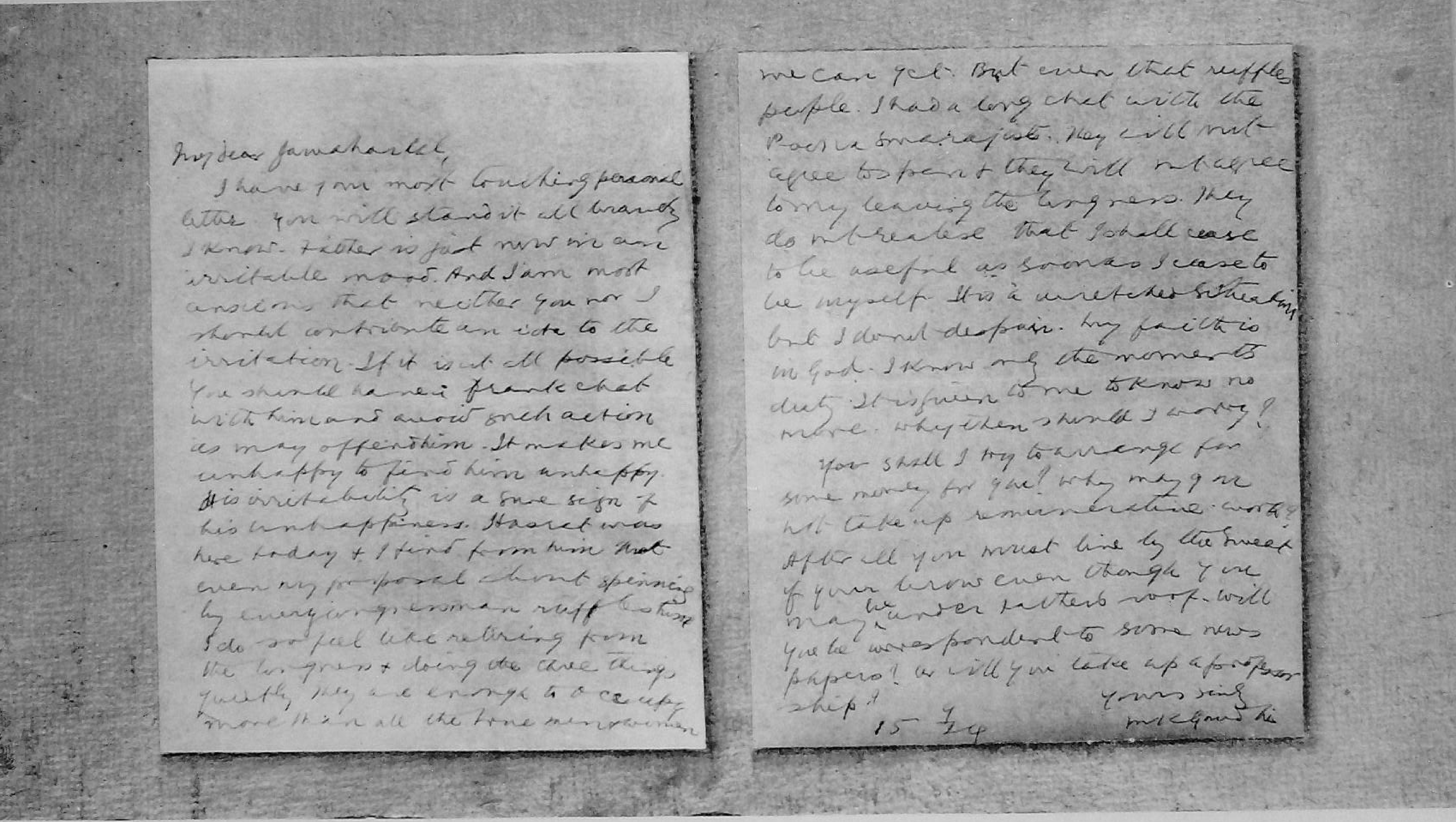
Mahadev Desai asked: "Should penance take only this shape, and no other? Is fasting prescribed by our religion?" "Certainly," said Gandhi. "What did the *rishis* of old do? It is unthinkable that they ate anything during their penance—in some cases, gone through in caves, for hundreds of years. Parvati who did penance to win Shiva would not touch even the leaves of trees, much less fruit or food. Hinduism is full of penance and prayer. I have decided on this fast with deeper deliberation than I gave to any of my previous fasts. I had such a fast in my mind, even when I conceived and launched non-co-operation. At that time I said to myself, I am placing this terrible weapon in the hands of the people. If it is abused I must pay the price by laying down my life. That moment seems to have arrived today. The object of the previous fasts was limited, the object of this is unlimited, and there is boundless love at the back of it. I am today bathing in that ocean of love."

"What have we done, Mahatmaji, to remedy the situation?" Shaukat Ali exclaimed. "Almost nothing. You have been preaching through your paper, but you have yet undertaken no long journey. Pray, travel through the affected areas and purify the atmosphere. This fast is hardly the way to fight the wrong."



*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi in a characteristic pose, 1924



My dear Jawaharlal,

I have your most touching personal letter. You will stand it all bravely I know. Father is just now in an irritable mood. And I am most anxious that neither you nor I should contribute an iota to the irritation. If it is at all possible you should have a frank chat with him and avoid such action as may offend him. It makes me unhappy to find him unhappy. His irritability is a sure sign of his unhappiness. Hasrat was here today & I find from him that even my proposal about spinning by every man & woman ruffles him. I do so feel like retiring from the Congress & doing the three things quietly. They are enough to occupy more than all the time men & women we can get. But even that ruffles people. I had a long chat with the Poona Swarajists. They will not agree to spin & they will not agree to my leaving the Congress. They do not realise that I shall cease to be useful as soon as I cease to be myself. It is a wretched situation but I do not despair. My faith is in God. I know only the moment to moment duty. It is given to me to know no more. Why then should I worry?

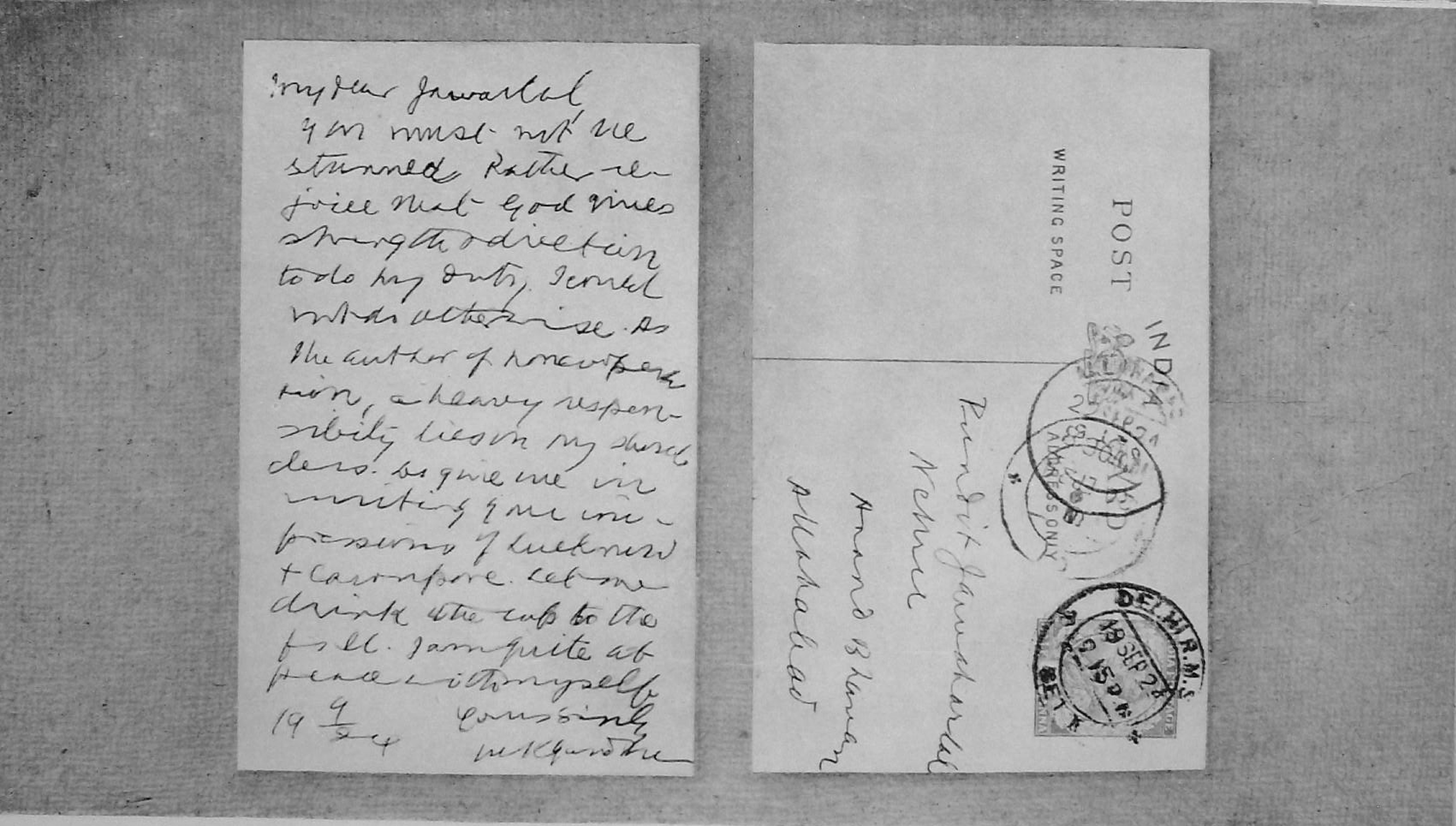
Now shall I try to arrange for some money for you? Why may you not take up remunerative work? After all you must live by the sweat of your brow even though you may be under father's roof. Will you be correspondent to some newspapers? or will you take up a professorship?

Yours sincly
M K Gandhi

15 9/24

Gandhi's letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, dated September 15, 1924, showing a deep personal interest in his doings

Courtesy : Jawaharlal Nehru

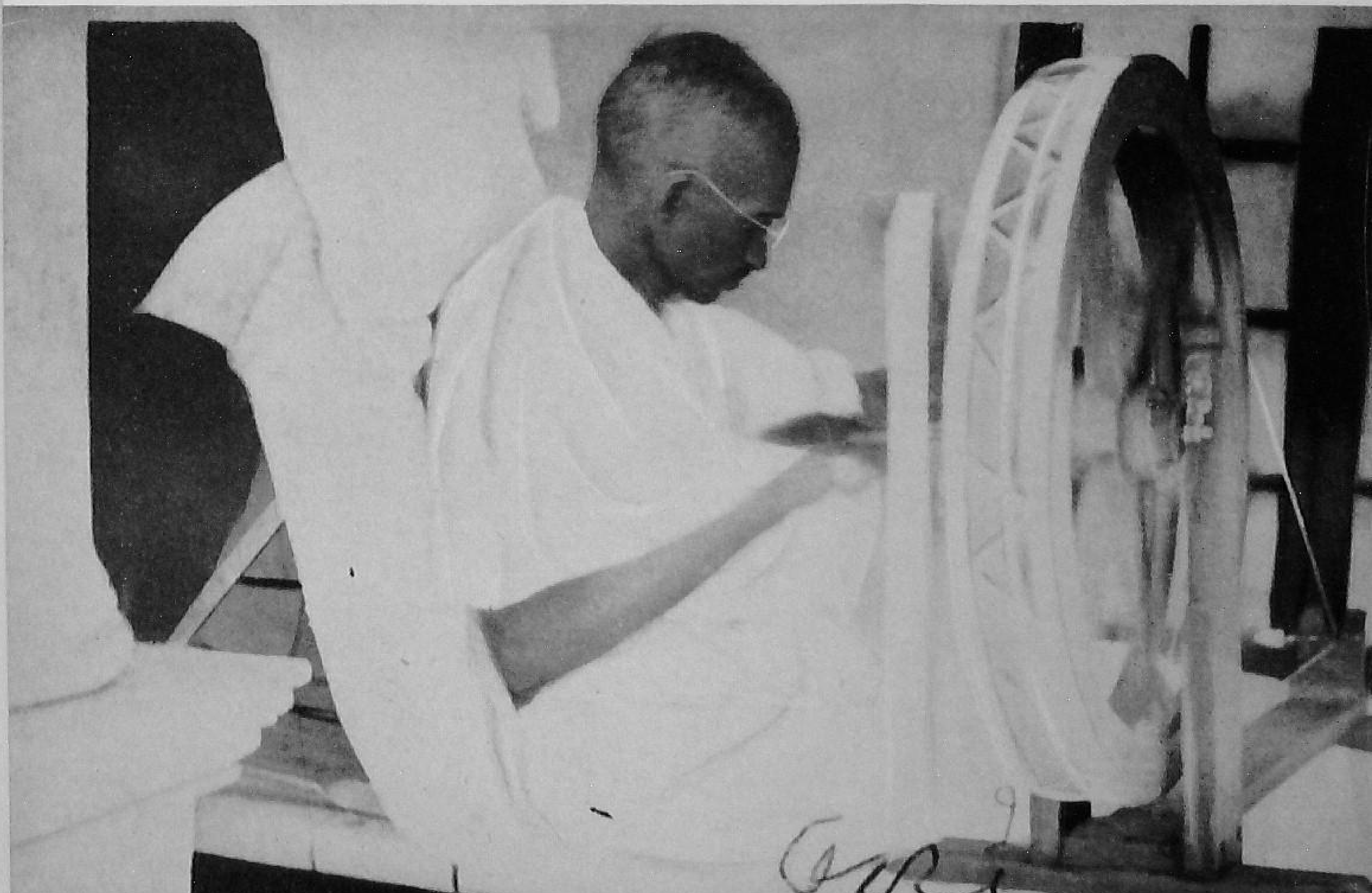

My dear Jawaharlal
You must not be
stunned. Rather re-
joice that God gives
strength & direction
to do my duty. I could
not do otherwise. As
the author of non-co-opera-
tion, a heavy respon-
sibility lies on my shoul-
ders. Do give me in
writing your im-
pressions of Lucknow
& Cawnpore. Let me
drink the cup to the
full. I am quite at
peace with myself.
19 9/24
Yours sincerely
M.K.Gandhi

POST
WRITING SPACE
INDIA
ADDRESS ONLY
DELHI R.M.S.
19 SEP 24

Pundit Jawaharlal
Nehru
Anand Bhavan
Allahabad

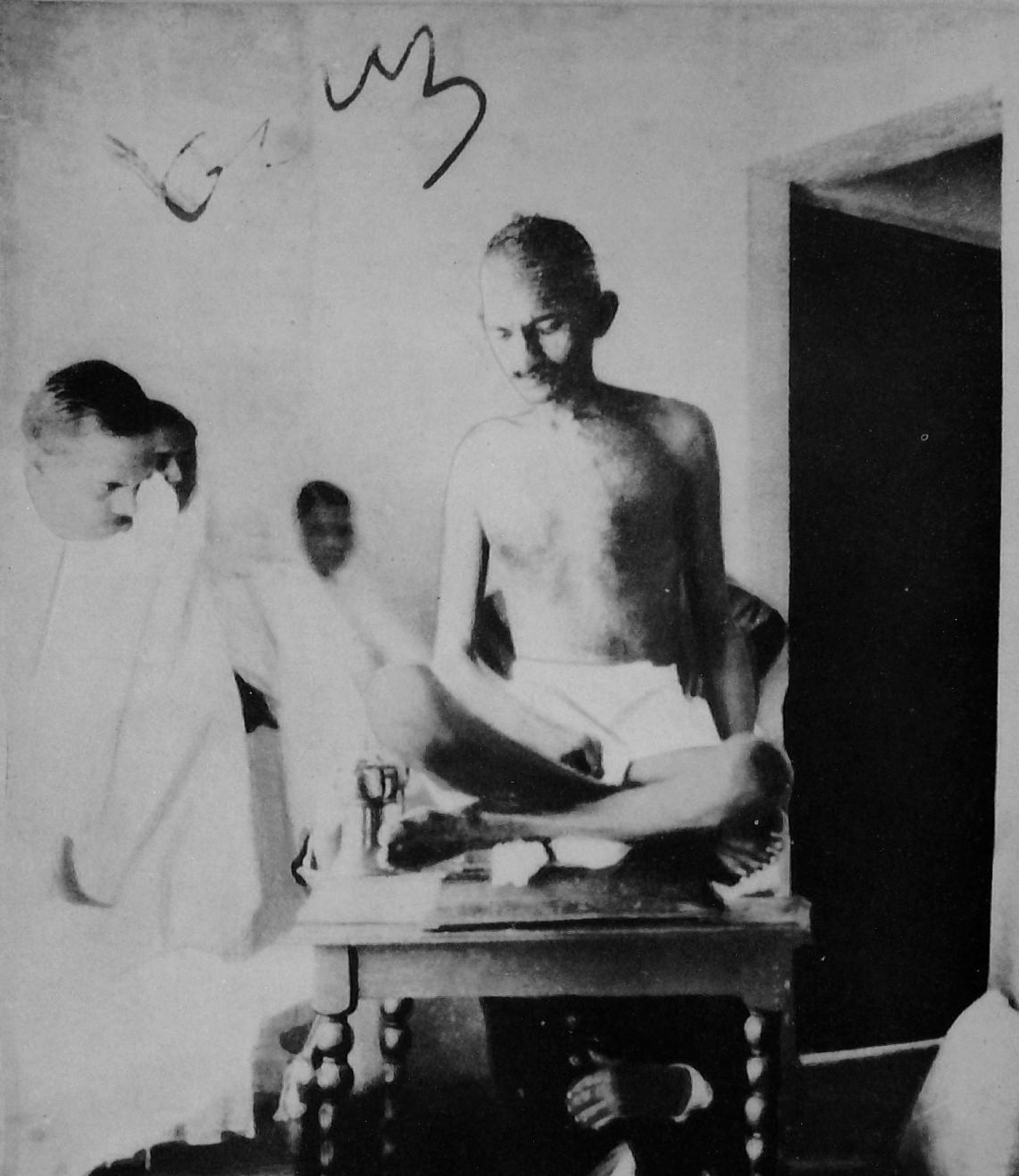
Courtesy : Jawaharlal Nehru

Gandhi's postcard to Jawaharlal Nehru, dated September 19, 1924, two days after the Delhi fast



*Courtesy : Kusumben Desai*

Gandhi at rest and work during his 21-day fast at Delhi for Hindu-Muslim unity, September 1924

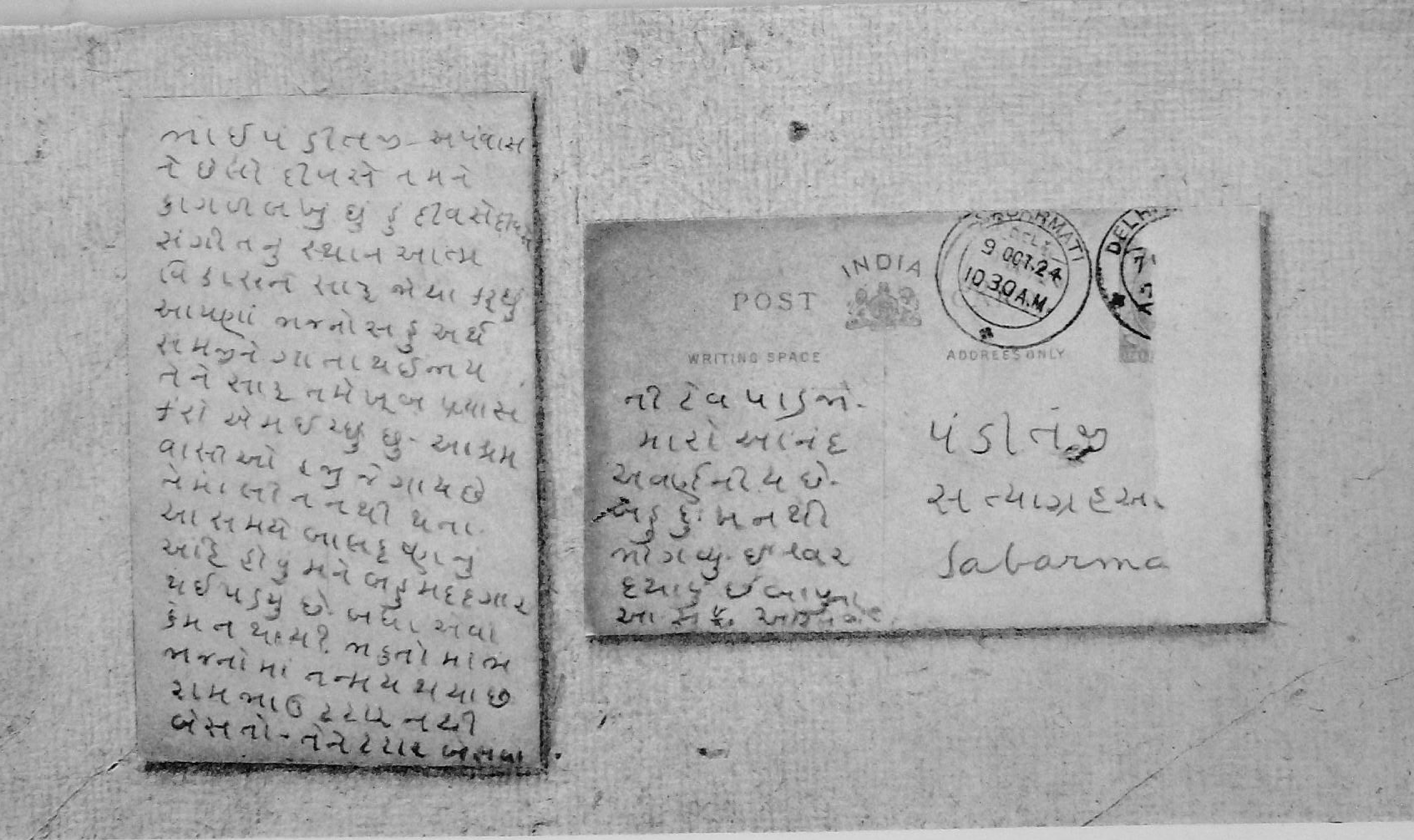


*Courtesy : Kusumben Desai*

Gandhi being weighed during the fast

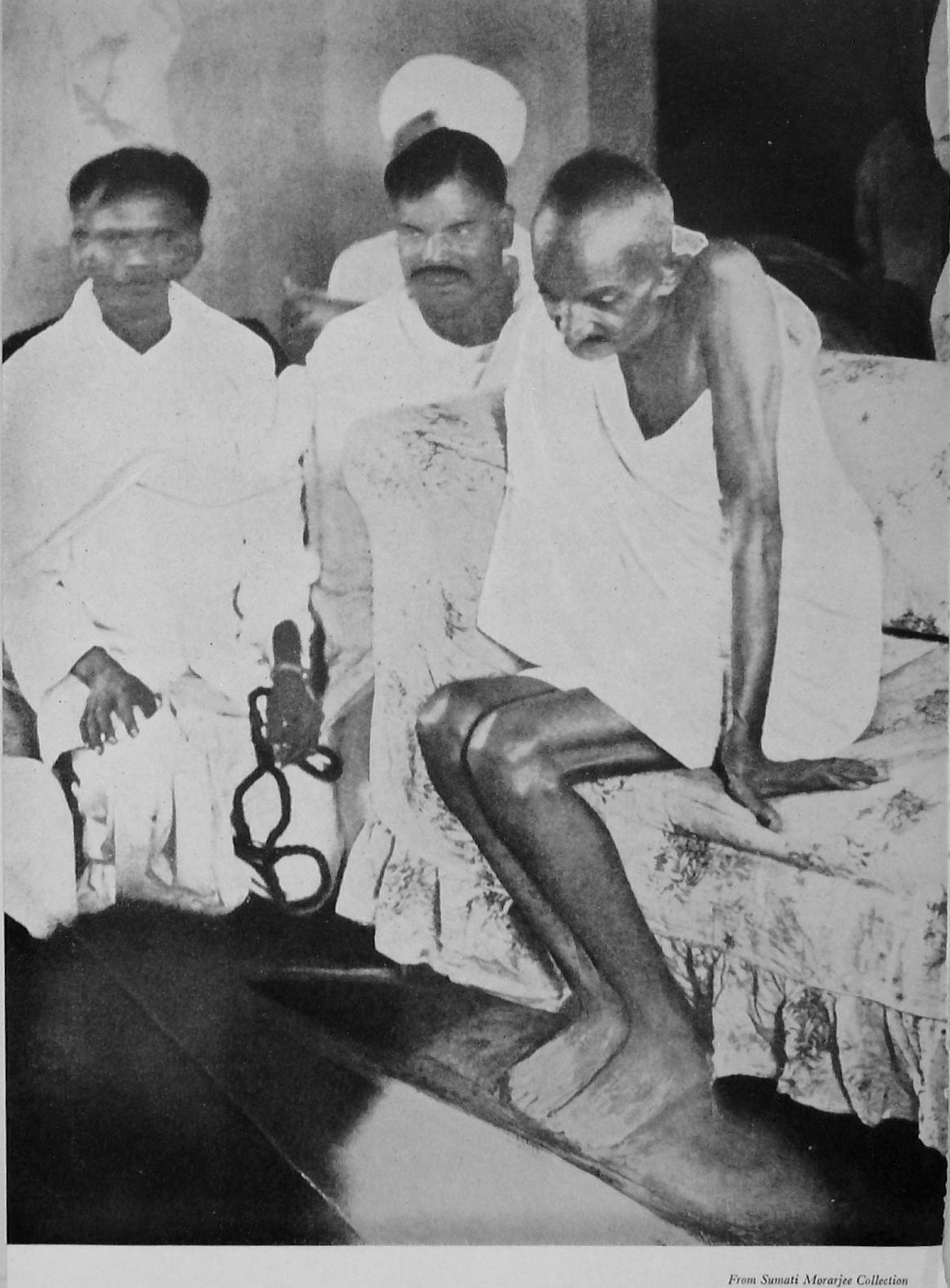
Courtesy : Kusumben Desai

Gandhi at the end of the fast




Courtesy : Mathuri Khare

Gandhi's postcard to Pandit Khare written on the last day of the fast showing his deep interest in devotional songs and music



*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi's meeting with the delegates of the Unity Conference, soon after the termination of the fast, at "Dilkhush", Delhi

Gandhi said: "It is for me purely a matter of religion. I looked around me, and questioned myself and found that I was powerless. What could I effect even by means of a long tour? The masses suspect us today. Do not believe that the Hindus in Delhi fully trust me. They were not unanimous in asking me to arbitrate. And naturally. There have been murders. How can I hope to be heard by those who have suffered? I would ask them to forgive those who have murdered their dearest ones. Who would listen to me? The Anjuman refuses to listen to Hakimji. When we were in the midst of negotiations about their arbitration I heard of Kohat. I asked myself, 'What are you going to do now?' I am an irrepressible optimist, but I always base my optimism on solid facts. You are an irrepressible optimist, but you at times base yours on sand. No one will listen to you today. In Visanagar, Gujarat, they gave a cold shoulder to Abbas Tyabji and Mahadev. In Ahmedabad a storm was nipped in the bud. Some trouble was brewing in Umreth, when I left Gujarat. That I should be a passive witness of all these, shows the depth of my incapacity. There are hundreds of sisters whose love and affection I still possess. They are in mortal fear today. To them, I want to show, by my own example, the way to die.

"Fight I do not mind, if it be fair, honourable, brave fighting between the two communities. But today it is all a story of unmitigated cowardice. They would throw stones and run away, murder and run away, go to law courts, put up false witnesses and cite false evidence. What a woeful record. How am I to make them brave? You are trying your best. But I should also try my best. I must recover the power to react on them."

"No," rejoined Shaukat Ali, "you have not failed. They listened to you; they were listening to you. In your absence they had other advisers. They listened to their advice and took to evil ways. They will still see the folly of their ways, I am sure. You have done much to reduce the poison in the popular mind. I would not bother about these disturbances at all. I would simply go and tell them, 'Devils, play this game to your hearts' content. God is still there. You may kill one another. You cannot kill Him.' Do not come in the way of the Lord. You are wrestling with Him. Let Him have His way."

"I wrestling with Him!" said Gandhi in surprise. "If there is pride or defiance in me, it is all over with me. Dear man, this fast

is the result of several days' continued prayers. I have got up from sleep at three in the night, and have asked Him what to do. On September 17 the answer came like a flash. If I have erred, He will forgive me. All I have done, all I am doing, is done in a fully god-fearing spirit, and in the house of a god-fearing Musalman at that. My religion says that only he who is prepared to suffer can pray to God. Fasting and prayer are common injunctions in my religion. But I know of this sort of penance even in Islam. In the life of the Prophet I have read that he often fasted and prayed, and forbade others to copy him. Some one asked him why he did not allow others to do the thing he himself was doing. 'Because I live on food divine,' he said. He achieved most of his great things by fasting and prayer. I learnt from him that only he can fast who has inexhaustible faith in God. The Prophet had revelations not in moments of ease and luxurious living. He fasted and prayed, kept awake for nights together and would be on his feet at all hours of the night as he received the revelations. Even at this moment I see before me the picture of the Prophet thus fasting and praying. My dear Shaukat, I cannot bear the people accusing you and your brother of having broken your promises to me. I cannot bear the thought of such an accusation. I must die for it. This fast is to purify myself, to strengthen myself. Let me not be misunderstood. I am speaking to you as though I was a Musalman, because I have cultivated that respect for Islam, which you have for it. After I have fasted and prayed I shall be all the stronger, with all my reverence for Islam, to appeal to both the communities. It is my firm belief that the strength of the soul grows in proportion as you subdue the flesh. We have to fight hooliganism and we are not sufficiently spiritually strong to fight it."

Friends and admirers flocked to Delhi to find ways and means for bringing about communal unity. A Unity Conference presided over by Motilal Nehru commenced its session on September 26. The three hundred delegates who attended the conference represented almost every school of thought in the country, some of the distinguished invitees being Dr. Westcott, the Metropolitan of India, Mrs. Besant, Shaukat Ali, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Swami Shraddhanand, Malaviya, Chintamani and Arthur Moore.

Mahomed Ali, the chairman of the reception committee of the conference, opened the proceedings with a prayer for the long life

of Gandhi, and everyone present prayed according to his own faith. On the first day the following resolution was passed:

"This conference places on record its deep grief and concern at the fast which Mahatma Gandhi has undertaken.

"The conference is emphatically of the opinion, that the utmost freedom of conscience and religion is essential, and condemns any desecration of places of worship, to whatever faith they may belong, and any persecution or punishment of any person for adopting or reverting to any faith; and it further condemns any attempts by compulsion to convert people to one's faith or to secure or enforce one's own religious observances at the cost of the rights of others.

"The members of the conference assure Mahatma Gandhi and pledge themselves to use their utmost endeavours to enforce these principles and to condemn any deviation from them, even under provocation.

"This conference authorizes the president to convey personally to Mahatma Gandhi the solemn assurance of this conference to the above effect as also the united wishes of this conference that Mahatma Gandhi should immediately break his fast in order to permit the conference to have the benefit of his co-operation, advice and guidance in deciding upon the speediest means of checking the evil which is fast overspreading the country."

Gandhi's reply to Motilal Nehru came on the following day:

"I ask you to assure the meeting that if I could have complied with its wishes I would gladly have done so. But I have examined and re-examined myself and I find that it is not possible for me to recall the fast. My religion teaches me that a promise once made or a vow once taken for a worthy object may not be broken. And you know my life has been regulated on that basis for now more than forty years.

"The causes of the fast are much deeper than I can explain in this note. For one thing I am expressing my faith through this fast. Non-co-operation was not conceived in hatred or ill will towards a single Englishman. Its non-violent character was intended to conquer Englishmen by our love. Not only has it not resulted in that consequence but the energy generated by it has brought about hatred and ill will against one another amongst ourselves. It is the knowledge of this fact which weighed me down and imposed this irrevocable penance upon me.

"The fast is, therefore, a matter between God and myself, and I would, therefore, not only ask you to forgive me for not breaking it but would ask you even to encourage me and pray for me that it may end successfully.

"I have not taken up the fast to die, but I have taken it up to live a better and purer life for the service of the country. If, therefore, I reach a crisis—of which humanly speaking I see no possibility whatever—when the choice lies between death and food, I shall certainly break the fast. But Dr. Ansari and Dr. Abdur Rahman, who are looking after me with the greatest attention and care, will tell you that I am keeping wonderfully fresh.

"I would, therefore, respectfully urge the meeting to transmute all personal affection of which the resolution is an index into solid, earnest and true work for unity for which the conference has met."

The Unity Conference sat for several days and passed many resolutions. The atmosphere at the conference was far from satisfactory and it looked as though the meeting would have to break up without any tangible result. There were terms and counter terms proposed by opposing groups, who seemed to have met together to strike a bargain rather than achieve unity.

Gandhi pleaded: "Hitherto it has been a struggle and a yearning for a change of heart among the Englishmen who compose the Government of India. That change has still to come. The struggle must for the moment be transferred to a change of heart among Hindus and Musalmans. Before they dare think of freedom they must be brave enough to love one another, to tolerate one another's religion, even prejudices and superstitions, and to trust one another. This requires faith in oneself. Faith in oneself is faith in God. If we have that faith, we shall cease to fear one another."

Among those who endeavoured to the utmost to infuse a spirit of seriousness in the conference was Maulana Azad. He came to the conference resolved, he said, to allow no palliation in respect to what he had come to regard as the undeniable excesses or unreasonable demands of any party for the sake of expediency and to observe no reserve in declaring the truth, however bitter and heart-rending it might prove to be for anyone. Without Azad the second and the most important resolution might not have been passed. "This conference declares that it is not only wrong against law but also against religion for anyone to take the law into his own hands,

either for the purpose of retaliation or punishment, and declares that all the points in dispute shall be decided by reference either to private arbitration, or where that is impossible, by reference to a court of law."

But an even more difficult question was that of the cow. Azad came to the rescue. The fervent appeal which he made to both communities was the turning-point of the discussion. He asked his co-religionists to remember that cow slaughter even for purposes of sacrifice was not an integral part of their religion, and he assured the Hindus that there were not a few Muslim leaders who had not only never tasted beef themselves, but were endeavouring to reduce the use of it among Muslims, if only to show their spirit of brotherliness with the Hindus. The conference was for the first time swept by a wave of enthusiasm and made the rest of the work easy. The conference did not result in all the good things expected of such a gathering, but for the time being it generated a degree of good feeling.

On October 6 Gandhi said: "Today is the twentieth day of my penance and prayer. Presently from the world of peace I shall enter the world of strife. The more I think of it, the more helpless I feel. So many look to me to finish the work begun by the Unity Conference. So many expect me to bring together the political parties. I know that I can do nothing. God can do everything. Oh God, make me Thy fit instrument and use me as Thou wilt. Man is nothing. Napoleon planned much and found himself a prisoner in St. Helena. The mighty Kaiser aimed at the crown of Europe and is reduced to the status of a private gentleman. God had so willed it. Let us contemplate such examples and be humble."

On October 8, Gandhi broke his fast. A description of the memorable occasion is given by C. F. Andrews:

"In the evening of the day before the fast was broken Mahatma Gandhi was wonderfully bright and cheerful. Many of his most intimate friends came to see him as he lay upon his bed on the open roof of the house, which was flooded by the moonlight. It was only four days before *purnima*.

"The time came for evening prayers. As usual he called everyone who was in the house, including the Congress volunteers in attendance, to join him in the evening prayer. The passage from the Gita, which is recited every night at the Sabarmati ashram, was said in

unison. It tells about the complete conquest of the soul over the body's senses and appetites. At its close it speaks of the blessed peace in the heart of the one who conquers. As I looked at that bright face before me I could well understand the meaning of the words that were being recited.

"After the Gita, one of Kabir's hymns was sung. Later on, the same evening, I asked for a translation, and I was told that Kabir in his hymn sings as a penitent to God, calling himself the chief of sinners. In God alone is his refuge. From experience I had learnt that hymns in this mood gave him most pleasure of all during his penance and fast. A wonderful exposition of the *Katha Upanishad* followed by Vinoba, then a long silence. The friends parted one by one, and he was left alone.

"Before four in the morning of the next day we were called for the morning prayers. There was no moon and it was very dark. A chill breeze was blowing from the east. The morning star was shining in a clear open sky above the Ridge. The phantom shapes of trees that rustled in the wind could be seen from the open room, where we were all seated. Bapu was wrapped warm in a dark shawl, and I asked him whether he had slept well. He replied: 'Yes, very well indeed!' It was a happiness to notice at once that his voice was stronger than the morning before, instead of weaker. It would be difficult to describe the emotion of that silence which followed on this last day of the long fast as we sat there waiting for all the household to assemble. We were all remembering that the final day had come. All the windows of the room where he was resting were open, and I sat gazing, now upon the figure reclining darkly upon the bed, and now out upon the stars.

"The hymn that was sung, at this special morning worship, was one that was a great favourite with Mahatmaji. It is in Gujarati. What it says is this: 'The way to God is only meant for heroes; it is not meant for cowards. There must be self-abandonment to the full. Only those who are ready to give up all for His sake can attain. As the diver dives down into the sea for pearls, even so heroic souls dive deep in their search for God.'

"After the prayers, the early morning hours passed very quietly indeed; but before eight o'clock a very large number of visitors had begun to arrive. Some went away again after being allowed to have his *darshan*. Others stayed on, waiting till the fast was broken. At

about ten Mahatmaji called for me and said: 'Can you remember the words of my favourite Christian hymn?' I said: 'Yes, shall I sing it to you now?'

" 'Not now,' he answered, 'but I have in my mind that when I break my fast, we might have a little ceremony, expressing religious unity. I should like the Imam Saheb to recite the opening verses of the Koran. Then I would like you to sing the Christian hymn, you know the one I mean. It begins, "When I survey the wondrous Cross," and ends with the words:

> Love so amazing, so divine,
> Demands my soul, my life, my all.

'And then last of all, I should like Shri Vinoba to recite from the Upanishads and Balkrishna to sing the Vaishnava hymn, describing the true Vaishnava.'

"Before noon, all the leaders and friends had assembled. Ladies also were present, who had loved to do him some service. As the time drew near, I went upstairs again and he asked me to see to it personally that every one should be allowed to be present including the servants of the house. Before this, quite early in the day, I had brought up the sweeper to see him, who had been serving us very faithfully and he had spoken to him some kindly words and had given him a smile of gratitude for the services he had rendered.

"Now at last the midday hour had come and the fast was to be broken. The doctors were called first by themselves, and he gave them the most touching words of thanks for all their love and devotion to him. Then Hakim Ajmal Khan Saheb was called, who had also cheered and helped him through his fast as a doctor and a friend. Maulana Mahomed Ali, his most tender and loving host, followed, and without any further order all went quietly into his room and greeted him with affection and sat down. The ladies who were present sat near the bedside. Swami Shraddhanand sat at the foot of the bed with his eyes closed in prayer. Pandit Motilal Nehru, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, Maulana Azad, the Ali brothers were all seated together near the bed with many others.

"The Imam Saheb, who had been his closest companion in South Africa and at the Sabarmati ashram, recited the wonderful Arabic opening words of the Koran, chanting its majestic language, which tells of God, the most Compassionate and the most Merciful, the

Creator and Sustainer of the universe, and the Helper of mankind. It ends with the prayer for His help to be guided in the path of righteousness and not in the way of sinners. After this, as had been arranged, the Christian hymn was sung. Then followed some very beautiful passages from the Upanishads, which were recited by Vinoba. Three of the *shlokas* may be translated thus:

"'Those alone can realize the Divine Light within, who have purified themselves through constant practice of truth, self-discipline, meditation and continence.'

"'By ceaseless pursuit of truth, the *rishis* of old attained their goal, even the supreme Truth.'

"'Let not my words belie my thoughts, not my thought belie my words. Let the Divine Light always shine before me. Let not my knowledge fail me. I shall say what is right and speak the truth.'

"After the 'Om, Shanti, Shanti, Shanti' had been uttered with the deepest reverence, Balkrishna began to sing. He sang the song of the true Vaishnava—'He is the true Vaishnava who knows and feels another's woes as his own. Ever ready to serve, he never boasts. He bows to every one and despises none, keeping his thought, word and deed pure. Blessed is the mother of such a one. He reveres every woman as his mother. He keeps an equal mind, does not stain his lips with falsehood; nor does he touch another's wealth. No bonds of attachment can hold him. Ever in tune with Ramanam, his body possesses in itself all places of pilgrimage. Free from greed and deceit, passion and anger, this is the true Vaishnava.'

"It was strangely beautiful to think, almost aloud, as each of these passages were uttered, how appropriate they were; how the ideal had been so nearly reached, along the hard pathway of suffering, by the one who was lying there about to break his fast. Every one felt their appropriateness and hearts were drawn together.

"Before the actual breaking of the fast, Mahatma Gandhi turned to Maulana Mahomed Ali, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. He spoke to them; and as he spoke his emotion was so deep that in his bodily weakness his voice could hardly be heard except by those who were nearest of all to him. He told them how, for thirty years, Hindu-Muslim unity had been his chief concern, and he had not yet succeeded in achieving it. He did not know what was the will of God, but on this day he would beseech them to promise to lay down their lives if necessary for the cause. Hindus

must be able to offer their worship with perfect freedom in their temples and Musalmans be able to say their *azan* and prayers with perfect freedom in their mosques. If this elementary freedom of worship could not everywhere be secured, then neither Hinduism nor Islam had any meaning.

"Hakim Ajmal Khan and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad renewed their solemn pledge on behalf of the Musalman community.

"Dr. Ansari brought some orange juice and Mahatma Gandhi drank it. So the fast was broken. The joy and thankfulness of those who were present cannot adequately be described. Throughout it all, as congratulations poured in upon him, Mahatmaji remained unmoved, quietly resting. Soon the room was left empty. Mahatma Gandhi remained in silence and the great strain of the breaking of the fast was over."

Among those who visited Dilkhush during the weeks of fast, there was a student from Santiniketan, named Ramachandran. One day Andrews introduced Ramachandran to Gandhi, saying : "He wants to ask you a few questions and I shall be so glad if you could have a talk with him before he leaves tomorrow to go back to Santiniketan." The tomorrow was a silent Monday, so Ramachandran had to stay a day more. On Tuesday morning he had to take his train to Calcutta. Exactly at half past five, after the morning prayer, he was summoned. He had set down his questions.

"How is it," asked Ramachandran, "that many intelligent and eminent men, who love and admire you, hold that consciously or unconsciously you ruled out of the scheme of national regeneration all considerations of art?" "I am sorry," replied Gandhi, "that in this matter I have been generally misunderstood. There are two aspects of things, the outward and the inward. It is purely a matter of emphasis with me. The outward has no meaning except in so far as it helps the inward. All true art is thus the expression of the soul. The outward forms have value only in so far as they are the expression of the inner spirit of man."

Ramachandran hesitatingly said : "The great artists themselves have declared that art is the translation of the urge and unrest in the soul of the artist into words, colours, shapes, etc." "Yes," said Gandhi, "art of that nature has the greatest possible appeal for me. But I know that many call themselves as artists, and are

recognized as such, and yet in their works there is absolutely no trace of the soul's upward urge and unrest."

"Have you any instance in mind?" "Yes," said Gandhi, "take Oscar Wilde. I can speak of him, as I was in England at the time that he was being much discussed and talked about."

"I have been told," put in Ramachandran, "that Oscar Wilde was one of the greatest literary artists of modern times."

"Yes, that is just my trouble. Wilde saw the highest art simply in outward forms and, therefore, succeeded in beautifying immorality. All true art must help the soul to realize its inner self. In my own case, I find that I can do entirely without external forms in my soul's realization. And, I can claim, that there is truly sufficient art in my life, though you might not see what you call works of art about me. My room may have blank walls; I may even dispense with the roof, so that I may gaze out upon the starry heavens overhead that stretch in an unending expanse of beauty. What conscious art of man can give me the panoramic scenes that open out before me, when I look up to the sky above with its shining stars? This, does not mean that I refuse to accept the value of productions of art, generally accepted as such, but that I personally feel how inadequate these are compared with the eternal symbols of beauty in nature. These productions of man's art have their value only so far as they help the soul onward towards self-realization."

"But the artists claim to see and to find truth through outward beauty," remarked Ramachandran. "Is it possible to see and find truth in that way?"

"I would reverse the order," Gandhi answered. "I see and find beauty in truth or through truth. All truths, not merely true ideas, but truthful faces, truthful pictures, or songs, are highly beautiful. People generally fail to see beauty in truth, the ordinary man runs away from it and becomes blind to the beauty in it. Whenever men begin to see beauty in truth, then true art will arise."

Ramachandran asked, "But cannot beauty be separated from truth, and truth from beauty?"

"I should want to know what is beauty," Gandhi said. "If it is what people generally understand by that word, then they are wide apart. Is a woman with fair features necessarily beautiful?"

"Yes," replied Ramachandran without thinking.

"Even if she may be of an ugly character?" asked Gandhi.

Ramachandran hesitated. Then he said: "But her face in that case cannot be beautiful. It will always be the index of the soul within. The true artist with the genius of perception will produce the right expression."

"But you are begging the whole question," Gandhi said. "You now admit that mere outward form may not make a thing beautiful. To a true artist only the face is beautiful which, quite apart from its exterior, shines with the truth within the soul. There is then, as I have said, no beauty apart from truth. On the other hand, truth may manifest itself in forms which may not be outwardly beautiful. Socrates, we are told, was the most truthful man of his time and yet his features are said to have been the ugliest in Greece. To my mind, he was beautiful because all his life was a striving after truth, and you may remember that his outward form did not prevent Phidias from appreciating the beauty of truth in him, though as an artist he was accustomed to see beauty in outward forms also."

"But," said Ramachandran, "the most beautiful things have often been created by men whose own lives were not beautiful."

"That," said Gandhi, "only means that truth and untruth often coexist; good and evil are often found together. In an artist also not seldom the right perception of things and the wrong coexist. Truly beautiful creations come when right perception is at work. If these moments are rare in life, they are also rare in art."

This set Ramachandran thinking hard. "If only truthful or good things can be beautiful, how can things without a moral quality be beautiful?" he said, half to himself and half aloud. Then he asked, "Is there truth in things that are neither moral nor immoral in themselves? For instance, is there truth in a sunset or a crescent moon that shines amid the stars at night?"

Gandhi observed: "These beauties are truthful, inasmuch as they make me think of the Creator at the back of them. How also could these be beautiful but for the truth that is in the centre of creation? When I admire the wonder of a sunset or the beauty of the moon my soul expands in worship of the Creator. I try to see Him and His mercies in all these creations. But even the sunsets and sunrises would be mere hindrances, if they did not help me to think of Him. Anything which is a hindrance to the flight of the soul, is a delusion and a snare; even, like the body, which often does hinder you in the path of salvation."

"I am grateful," said Ramachandran, "to hear your views on art, and I understand and accept them. Would it not be well for you to set them down for the benefit of the younger generation in order to guide them aright?"

"That," replied Gandhi, "I could never dream of doing, for the simple reason that it would be an impertinence on my part to hold forth on art. I am not an art student, though these are my fundamental convictions. I do not speak or write about it, because I am conscious of my own limitations. That consciousness is my only strength. Whatever I might have been able to do in my life has proceeded more than anything else out of the realization of my own limitations. My functions are different from the artist's and I should not go out of my way to assume his position."

Ramachandran turned to the next question, "Are you against all machinery?"

"How can I be," he said, smiling at the naïve question, "when I know that even this body is a delicate piece of machinery? The spinning wheel itself is a machine; a little toothpick is a machine. What I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such. The craze is for what they call labour-saving machinery. Men go on 'saving labour' till thousands are without work and thrown on the streets to die of starvation. I want to save time and labour, not for a fraction of mankind, but for all. I want the concentration of wealth, not in the hands of a few, but in the hands of all. Today machinery helps a few to ride on the backs of millions. The impetus behind it is not the philanthropy to save labour, but greed. It is against this constitution of things that I am fighting with all my might."

"Then," remarked Ramachandran, "you are fighting not against machinery as such, but against its abuses which are so much in evidence today?"

"I would unhesitatingly say, yes; but I would add that scientific truths and discoveries should first cease to be the mere instruments of greed. Then labourers will not be overworked and machinery instead of becoming a hindrance will be a help. I am aiming not at eradication of all machinery, but limitation."

Ramachandran said, "When logically argued out, that would imply that all complicated power-driven machinery should go."

"It might have to go," admitted Gandhi, "but I must make one thing clear. The supreme consideration is man. The machine should

not tend to make atrophied the limbs of man. For instance, I would make intelligent exceptions. Take the case of the Singer Sewing Machine. It is one of the few useful things ever invented, and there is a romance about the device itself. Singer saw his wife labouring over the tedious process of sewing and seaming with her own hands, and simply out of his love for her he devised the sewing-machine in order to save her from unnecessary labour. He, however, saved not only her labour but also the labour of everyone who could purchase a sewing-machine."

"But, in that case," said Ramachandran, "there would have to be a factory for making these Singer Sewing Machines, and it would have to contain power-driven machinery of ordinary type."

"Yes, surely," said Gandhi, smiling at Ramachandran's opposition. "But I am socialist enough to say that such factories should be nationalized or state-controlled. They ought only to be working under the most attractive and ideal conditions, not for profit, but for the benefit of humanity, love taking the place of greed as the motive. It is an alteration in the conditions of labour that I want. This mad rush for wealth must cease and the labourer must be assured not only of a living wage but a daily task that is not a mere drudgery. The machine will, under these conditions, be as much a help to the man working it as to the state, or the man who owns it. The present mad rush will cease and the labourer will work, as I have said, under attractive and ideal conditions. This is but one of the exceptions I have in mind. The sewing-machine had love at its back. The individual is the one supreme consideration. The saving of labour of the individual should be the object, and honest humanitarian considerations, and not greed the motive. Thus I would welcome any day a machine to straighten crooked spindles. Not that blacksmiths will cease to make spindles—they will continue to provide the spindles—but when the spindle gets wrong every spinner will have a machine of his own to get it straight. Therefore, replace greed by love and everything will come right."

The next morning Ramachandran had another talk.

"So truth is the main thing," he said resuming the conversation. "Beauty and truth are not separate aspects of the same thing."

"Truth," said Gandhi with greater emphasis, "is the first thing to be sought for, and beauty and goodness will then be added unto you. Jesus was, to my mind, a supreme artist, because he saw

and expressed truth; and so was Mahomed, the Koran being the most perfect composition in all Arabic literature—at any rate, that is what scholars say. It is because both of them strove first for truth, that the grace of expression naturally came in; and yet neither Jesus nor Mahomed wrote on art. That is the truth and beauty I crave for, live for, and would die for."

Ramachandran reverted to his difficulties as to Gandhi's logical position with regard to machinery. "If you make an exception of the Singer Sewing Machine and your spindle," he said, "where would these exceptions end?"

Gandhi replied, "Just where they cease to help the individual and encroach upon his individuality. The machine should not be allowed to cripple the limbs of man."

"But I was not thinking just now of the practical side," said Ramachandran. "Ideally would you not rule out all machinery? When you except the sewing-machine, you will have to make exceptions of the bicycle, the motor-car, etc.?"

"No, I don't," said Gandhi, "because they do not satisfy any of the primary wants of man; for it is not the primary need of man to traverse distances with the rapidity of a motor-car. The needle, on the contrary, happens to be an essential thing in life, a primary need. Ideally, however, I would rule out all machinery, even as I would reject this very body, which is not helpful to salvation and seek the absolute liberation of the soul. From that point of view, I would reject all machinery, but machines will remain because like the body, they are inevitable. The body itself, as I told you, is the purest piece of mechanism; but if it is a hindrance to the highest flights of the soul, it has to be rejected."

"Why is it a necessary evil?" asked Ramachandran. "May not after all some artists be able to see truth in and through beauty?"

"Some may," said Gandhi, "but here too, just as elsewhere, I must think in terms of the millions. And to the millions we cannot give that training to acquire a perception of beauty, in such a way as to see truth in it. Show them truth first and they will see beauty afterwards. Orissa haunts me in my waking hours and in my dreams. Whatever can be useful to those starving millions is beautiful to my mind. Let us give today first the vital things of life, and all the graces and ornaments of life will follow."

## *Belgaum Congress*

1924

UNEXPECTED events awaited Gandhi's termination of fast. He was looking forward to proceeding to Kohat in company of the Muslim colleagues and investigate from the inhabitants the cause of the Hindu-Muslim dissensions, and bring about peace between the two communities. But the Government refused to give him permission to visit Kohat.

The Government struck in Bengal. The anti-Swarajist campaign was led by the Governor himself, branding C. R. Das and all his followers as arch-enemies of the country making the Government wellnigh impossible.

Following groundless indictments, the Governor of Bengal, on October 25, 1924, promulgated a new ordinance, and Calcutta and the rest of Bengal was thrown into a wild tumult of indiscriminate arrests and house searches. Raids began in the early morning and lasted the whole day. Some sixty houses were raided, mostly the Congress offices, the offices of the Swaraj Party and the houses of prominent Swarajists. Subhas Chandra Bose, the chief executive officer of the Calcutta Corporation and the right-hand man of Das, and some forty others, including many prominent Congressmen and Swarajists, were arrested. The warrants for the searches were to the effect that they were to be conducted in view of the information received for the recovery, if possible, of revolvers, bombs and explosives. In the raids nothing of that sort was found. But the police carried away all the documents and books belonging to the Swaraj Party.

A great wave of anger and protest swept the country. Hundreds of meetings were held all over India and resolutions were passed condemning the ordinance. Men like Sastri, Jinnah and others who were wholly opposed to the Swarajist policy were unanimous in condemning the Government action. The strongest condemnation

of the "Ordinance of Violence" came from Gandhi. Writing in *Young India*, on October 31, he said:

"The expected has come to pass. The English press had foreshadowed for us the viceregal bomb. It is the Hindu new year's gift to Bengal and through her to India. The step need not surprise us nor terrify us. The Rowlatt Act is dead but the spirit that prompted it is like an evergreen. So long as the interest of Englishmen is antagonistic to that of Indians, so long must there be anarchical crime or the dread of it and an edition of the Rowlatt Act in answer. Non-violent non-co-operation was the way out. But we had not the patience to try it long enough and far enough . . .

"Deshbandhu Das, by his work in the Bengal Council, has shown that the Bengal Government has not the popular opinion behind it. The theory that he has set up a system of terrorism must be rejected. There is no evidence to support the charge. You cannot win popular elections by terrorism nor can you hold a large party together by it. There is something inherently commendable to the people to make Deshbandhu the undisputed master of his large party in Bengal. The reason is on the surface. He wants power for the people. He does not bend the knee to the rulers. He is impatient to release Bengal and India from the triple burden. Let him sing another tune, let him say he does not want freedom for the people, and he will lose his influence in spite of the terrorism imputed to him. I have my differences with Deshbandhu, but they cannot blind me to his burning patriotism or his great sacrifice. He loves the country just as much as the best of us. His right-hand men have been torn away from him. They are all men of status. They enjoy the confidence of the people. Why should they not have an open, fair and ordinary trial? The summary arrest of such men under extraordinary powers is the surest condemnation of the existing system of Government. It is wrong, it is uncivilized for a microscopic minority of men to live in the midst of millions under the protection of the bayonet, gunpowder and arbitrary powers. It is no doubt a demonstration of their ability to impose their authority upon a people more numerous than they, but it is also a demonstration of barbarism that lies beneath a thin coating of civilization.

"To the Bengalis, who are on their trial, I respectfully say: 'If you are innocent, as I believe most of you are, your incarceration can only do good to the country and yourselves, if you will take it in the

right spirit. We will not win freedom without suffering.' To those who may be real anarchists and believers in violence I urge: 'Your love of the country commands my admiration, but you will permit me to say that your love is blind. In my opinion India's freedom will not be won by violence but only by the purest suffering without retaliation. It is the surest and the most expeditious method. But if you persist in your faith in the method of violence, then I ask you to make a bold confession of your faith and dare to suffer even though it be unto death. Thereby you will prove your courage and honesty and save many innocent persons from involuntary suffering.' "

In spite of his weak health, Gandhi rushed to Calcutta. His presence gave courage and solace to the people of Bengal who flocked to the meetings in thousands. "While every form of violence is detestable to me, the Government lawlessness and police intimidation are still more so," said Gandhi. "Never in all my experience have I known Bengal so profoundly moved. The most striking thing confronting Government today is the newly recovered Hindu-Muslim unity." To counteract the Government attack and strengthen the Swarajist Party, Gandhi, Das and Motilal Nehru devised ways and means and issued the following statement from Calcutta on November 6:

"Whereas, although swaraj is the goal of all the parties in India, the country is divided into different groups seemingly working in opposite directions, and whereas such antagonistic activity retards the progress of the nation towards swaraj and whereas it is desirable to bring, so far as possible, all such parties within the Congress and on a common platform, and whereas the Congress itself is divided into two opposing sections, resulting in harm to the country's cause, and whereas it is desirable to reunite these parties for the purpose of furthering the common cause, and whereas a policy of repression has been commenced in Bengal by the local Government with the sanction of the Governor-General, and whereas in the opinion of the undersigned this repression is aimed in reality not at any party of violence but at the Swaraj Party in Bengal and, therefore, at constitutional and orderly activity, and whereas, therefore, it has become a matter of immediate necessity to invite and secure the co-operation of all parties for putting forth the united strength of the nation against the policy of repression, we, the undersigned,

strongly recommend the following for adoption by all parties and eventually by the Congress at Belgaum:

"The Congress should now suspend the programme of non-co-operation as the national programme, except in so far as it relates to the refusal to use or wear cloth made out of India.

"The Congress should resolve that different classes of work of the Congress may be done, as may be found necessary, by the different sections within the Congress and should resolve that the spread of hand-spinning, hand-weaving and all the antecedent process and the spread of hand-spun and hand-woven khadi and the promotion of unity between different communities, specially between the Hindus and the Musalmans, and the removal of untouchability by the Hindus from amongst them, should be carried on by all sections within the Congress, and the work in connection with the central and provincial legislatures should be carried on by the Swaraj Party on behalf of the Congress and as an integral part of the Congress organization, and for such work the Swaraj Party should make its own rules and raise and administer its own funds. Inasmuch as experience has shown that without universal spinning India cannot become self-supporting regarding her clothing requirements, and inasmuch as hand-spinning is the best and the most tangible method of establishing a visible and substantial bond between the masses and Congressmen and women, and in order to popularize hand-spinning and its products the Congress should repeal article VII of the constitution and should substitute: No one shall be a member of a Congress committee or organization who is not of the age of eighteen and who does not wear hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar at political and Congress functions or while engaged in Congress business, and does not make a contribution of 2,000 yards of evenly spun yarn per month of his or her own spinning or in case of illness, unwillingness or any such cause a like quantity of yarn spun by any other person."

Commenting on the statement, Gandhi wrote: "I thank God that He gave me strength to surrender to the Swarajists all that was possible for me to surrender—much more than I had expected. The agreement puts the Swarajists on a par with the no-changers. Non-violence means utmost accommodation compatible with one's principles. Swarajists claim to be a growing body. That they have made an impression on the Government cannot be gainsaid.

Opinion may differ as to its value but it is not possible to question the fact itself. They have shown firm determination, grit, discipline and cohesion and have not feared to carry their policy to the point of defiance. Once assumed the desirability of entering councils, it must be admitted that they have introduced a new spirit into the Indian legislatures. That their very brilliance takes the nation's mind away from itself is to one like me regrettable, but so long as our ablest men continue to believe in council entry, we must make the best of legislatures. Though an uncompromising no-changer, I must not only tolerate their attitude and work with them but I must even strengthen them wherever I can."

Gandhi came in for strong criticism for the agreement with the Swarajists. His reply was:

"It is not to be wondered at that no-changers are intensely dissatisfied with the agreement arrived at between the Swarajists and myself. I have repeatedly admitted that I am but a humble explorer of the science of non-violence. Its hidden depths sometimes stagger me just as much as they stagger fellow workers. I observe that the agreement seems just now to satisfy no one but the parties to it. Many Englishmen regard it as an ignominious surrender to the Swarajists on my part. Many no-changers regard it as a lapse if not a betrayal. A friend says that it has caused consternation among students. Why, they ask, should they remain in national schools if non-co-operation is suspended? They are the greatest sufferers and they have not been considered in the pact at all. I hold a letter from an Andhra friend which arrests attention and calls for a reasoned reply.

"Surrender on my part it undoubtedly is. It is a conscious surrender, but not, as an English paper puts it, to the party of violence. I refuse to believe that the Swaraj Party is a party of violence. Such charges were I know levelled against even the late Dadabhai Naoroji and Justice Ranade. They were suspected and shadowed. Harkishenlal, who had no more to do with any party of violence than Sir Michael O'Dwyer himself, was arrested and imprisoned by that satrap. I would have been false to the country if I had not stood by the Swaraj Party in the hour of its need. Let it be unequivocally demonstrated that it has had anything to do with violence and I shall be prepared to denounce it in a strong language as is open to me to use. On such proof I shall sever all connection with it.

But till then, I must stand by it even though I do not believe in the efficacy of council entry or even some of the methods of conducting council warfare.

"But recognition of the party as an integral part of the Congress does not mean surrender by individuals of their non-co-operation. It means an admission that the Swaraj Party is a strong and growing wing of the Congress. And if it refuses to take a back seat without a fight, and if it is necessary or expedient to avoid a fight, the claim to a definite official recognition is irresistible. Every Congressman, however, is not, by reason of his being a Congressman, assumed to be a believer in all the items of a Congress programme. My own position, I admit, is somewhat different. I have made myself instrumental in bringing the agreement into being. I am not sorry for it. Rightly or wrongly, the country expects me to give it some guidance. And I have come to the conclusion that it is in the interest of the country to give the Swaraj Party the fullest possible chance of working out its own programme without let or hindrance from no-changers. The latter are not bound to participate in its activity, if they do not like it. They are free and bound, as the Swarajists are bound, to pursue the constructive programme only. They are free also to retain their individual non-co-operation. But suspension by the Congress means that non-co-operators can derive no support or strength from the Congress. They must derive all their strength from within. And that is their test and trial. If their faith abides, it is well with them and non-co-operation. If it vanishes with suspension, non-co-operation dies as a force in public life. But a friend says, 'If you waver, what about lesser men?' I have not wavered. My faith in non-co-operation is as bright as ever. It has been with me a principle of life for over thirty years. But I cannot impose my personal faith on others, never on a national organization. I can but try to convince the nation of its beauty and usefulness. If I find in reading the national mind, that the nation in so far as it is represented by the Congress must have breathing time, I must cry halt. I may misread the mind of the Congress. When that happens, I shall cease to be a force in the Congress. That will be no calamity. But it would be a calamity if by my obstinacy, I stand in the way of the country's progress by other means, so long as they are not positively mischievous and harmful. I should, for instance, rise even if I was alone, against methods of actual violence. But I have

recognized that the nation has the right, if it so wills, to vindicate her freedom even by violence. Only then India ceases to be the land of my love even though she be the land of my birth even as I should take no pride in my mother if she went astray. But the Swaraj Party is a party of orderly progress. It may not swear by non-violence as I do, but it accepts non-violence as a policy and it discountenances violence, because it considers it to be useless if not even harmful. It occupies a prominent position in the Congress. I do not know that if its strength was tested, it might not be found even to occupy a predominant position. It is easy enough for me to secede from the Congress and let the party run the Congress. That I can and will do when I find that I have nothing in common with the party. But so long as I have the faintest hope of its redemption, I shall cling to it like a child to its mother's breast. I will not weaken it by disowning or denouncing it or by retiring from the Congress.

"I have used the word 'redemption' in no offensive sense. I have too my method of *shuddhi* and *tabligh*. It is the best the world has yet seen. Conscious of my own ground and strength, I let the party act upon me and influence me as much as it will. It enables me to know it at its best. I make no secret of my intention that by coming under its influence, I hope to influence it in favour of my method. If in the process, it redeems me and converts me, all honour to it. I should then declare my conversion from the house-top. It is *shuddhi* by reason appealing to reason and heart speaking to heart. It is the non-violent method of conversion. Let non-co-operators join forces with me. At the same time let them remain firm in their individual conduct. If their non-co-operation springs from love, I promise that they will convert the Swarajists and even if they don't succeed, they will have lost nothing personally. If the country is with them, the Swarajists, if they do not follow, will naturally take a back seat. And if the latter gain ground during the twelve months of grace, they must be undisputed masters of the Congress, and non-co-operators must be content to be in a minority. They may register me in advance as one of that minority."

Mahomed Ali, as President of the Congress, convened a conference in Bombay on November 21, to consider all the recommendations published over the signatures of Gandhi, Das and Nehru "with a view to unite all the parties and induce those who in 1920 felt called upon to retire from the Congress to rejoin it and to meet the

recrudescence of repression which is evidently aimed at the Swaraj Party of Bengal". Some 400 delegates responded to the invitation and attended the conference on the appointed day. Among the prominent personalities were Mrs. Besant, Sastri, Jinnah, Chintamani, B. C. Pal, Jayakar, Nehru, Das and Vithalbhai Patel. Besides these there were maulvis, pundits and non-Brahmin leaders. Gandhi attended it with hope. Mahomed Ali resigned his right of presiding over the conference in favour of Sir Dinshaw Petit. The conference condemned the Government repression in Bengal and appointed a committee to consider the best way of reuniting all political parties in the Congress and to prepare a scheme of swaraj including a communal settlement—to report by March 31, 1925.

The conference was followed by a meeting of the A.-I.C.C. which accepted the joint statement issued by Gandhi, Das and Nehru. It decided in the interest of unity to suspend non-co-operation; but in future all the Congress members must give 2,000 yards of hand-spun yarn monthly, instead of the four-anna subscription. This arrangement did not preclude "any Congressman who, on conscientious grounds desires to practise non-co-operation in his own person, from doing so, without prejudice to and interference with the activities of the Swaraj Party on behalf of the Congress." Soon after the A.-I.C.C., Das divested himself of all his property including his house worth Rs. 8 lakhs, for national and philanthropic purposes.

All the while the Hindu-Muslim problem was before Gandhi's mind. Early in December a series of informal conferences between the Hindu and the Muslim leaders were held at Lahore under his guidance. He met all schools of thought among the Hindus and Muslims and discussed the problem impassionately. But the decision which required an all-India solution was postponed till the impending session of the Congress.

On the eve of the Congress, Gandhi observed:

"I should like the workers to know that I am to preside at the forthcoming Congress only as a business man presides at business meetings. The demonstrative character of the Congress will be exemplified in its exhibition and other side-shows. And if we are to do any substantial business, workers must frame a programme of work beforehand. If we are to do this, all the workers should attend and give their help. This they cannot do unless they understand, appreciate and whole-heartedly accept the agreement. I would not

like their acceptance out of loyalty, whether they are Swarajists or no-changers. The agreement is not for show. It has been arrived at not to impress others but ourselves. Mere outward assent without inward conviction and co-operation would be worse than useless. So far I have not received any criticism from the Swarajists except by way of an appeal from some for not changing the franchise as proposed. But I am besieged with angry or sorrowful protests from no-changers. I am endeavouring so far as is possible for me to explain the position and solve doubts through these pages. But I know that there is nothing in the world like a full and free chat. I was hardly able to do justice to the no-changers or myself at the hour's chat with them whilst the A.-I.C.C. was sitting. I am, therefore, setting apart the 20th instant for a conference with no-changers at Belgaum which I hope to reach in the morning of that day. I am asking Gangadharrao Deshpande to avoid demonstration and let me enter Belgaum quietly so that no time may be wasted. I request all the no-changers who wish to take part in the discussion, to attend this informal discussion. At the same time I would warn them against flooding Belgaum so early. The Congress session will not begin before the 26th instant. The Khilafat Conference does not begin before the 24th instant. The national convention cannot be much earlier. I suggest that the no-changers in each province should select two or three as their spokesmen and representatives who should be fully armed with the views of the rest. The whole of the afternoon of the 20th can be given to interchange of views and there may be further discussion on the 21st if need be. I am corresponding with Deshbandhu Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru to ask whether they would like me to have a similar discussion with the Swarajists. I would gladly give a part of the 21st solely to them. So far as the attendance of delegates is concerned, I hope that there will be full attendance on the part of both the parties. For, though so far as I am concerned, I want to carry no proposition of importance by party voting, I am anxious to know the mind of the delegates. It would not be a proper discharge of their trust, if they stay away out of apathy, indifference or disgust. No one should offer himself as a delegate who does not wish to devote his time and attention to the national work. Every delegate is in duty bound to attend, if it is humanly possible, and help to shape the Congress policy for the coming year."

In the week preceding the session, Gandhi prepared the ground for the decisions of the Congress. In accordance with previous arrangements, he met both the no-changers and the Swarajists at informal conferences when he tried to persuade them to see each other's point of view. Throughout the discussions, he placed the charkha in the forefront. When they said they wanted a fighting programme, he answered: "The fighting programme is there in boycott of foreign cloth which, if properly carried out, will bring about an atmosphere for something like civil disobedience." The main discussion centred round the spinning franchise in lieu of the four-anna franchise. Indeed, this was the point which Gandhi claimed as a set-off against his readiness to suspend the non-co-operation movement, and as recognition of the Swarajists as Congressmen, who would work in the legislatures on behalf of the Congress.

The thirty-ninth session of the Indian National Congress was held at Belgaum on December 26, with Gandhi as president. Coming after the Delhi and Bombay unity conferences, it sought to bring together all the political parties in the country. Invitations were sent to all the leaders, suggesting that for the sake of national unity they should hold their conferences at Belgaum. To this Mrs. Annie Besant and the non-Brahmins agreed, but the Liberals had already made arrangements to meet at Lucknow for their annual conference.

The Khilafat Conference was held in the Congress pandal with Dr. Kitchlew as president. It supported the Congress programme and appealed to the Muslims to participate in the Congress with greater enthusiasm. The session of the Muslim League was held at Bombay on December 30 with Raza Ali as president. The meeting was well attended by a number of delegates from all over India and also by Mrs. Besant, Nehru and Patel. Jinnah, Shaukat Ali and Maulana Zafar Ali Khan took prominent part in the discussion. The Muslim League condemned the Bengal ordinance and stood for a united front with the Hindus, though Jinnah put forth a Muslim demand regarding separate representation of the Muslim community in the legislatures.

The session of the Hindu Mahasabha was held in the Congress pandal at Belgaum on December 27, with Malaviya as president. Attendance was very large and included Gandhi, C. R. Das, Motilal

*Courtesy : Katti's Art Studio*

Gandhi at the volunteers' rally, Belgaum Congress, December 1924

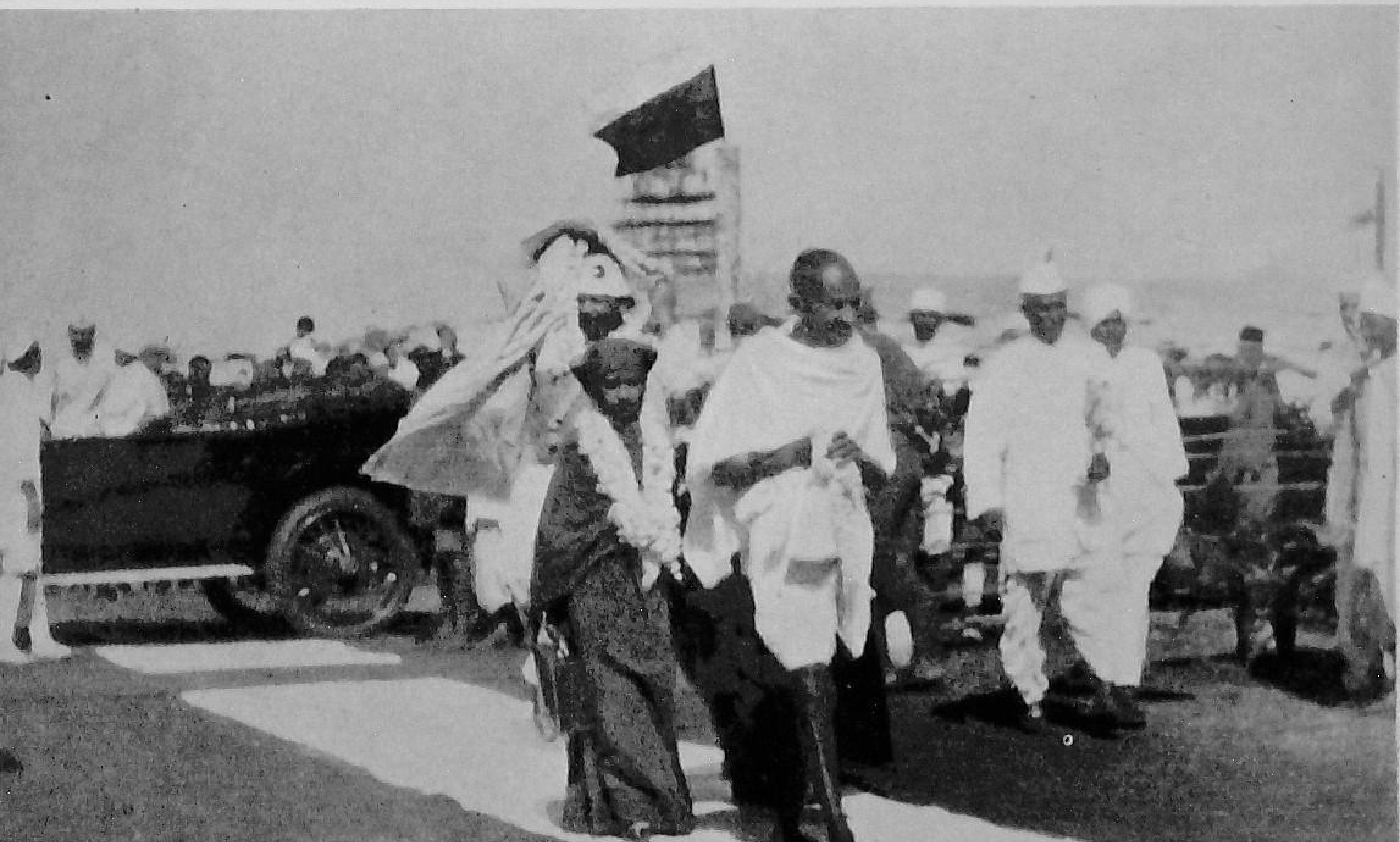
Courtesy : Katti's Art Studio

Mahomed Ali handing over charge of the Congress presidentship to Gandhi at Belgaum

Gandhi addressing the volunteers : in the background are Shaukat Ali, Mahomed Ali, Jawaharlal Nehru and Abul Kalam Azad

Courtesy : Katti's Art Studio

Gandhi decorating the Congress volunteers



*Courtesy : N. Kulkarni*

Gandhi accompanied by Begum Mahomed Ali on the way to the Congress pandal

*Courtesy : N. Kulkarni*

The Congress presidential procession

*Courtesy : Katti's Art Studio*

Gandhi giving his presidential speech at the open session of the Belgaum Congress

*Courtesy : N. Kulkarni*

Conclusion of the Congress session

Gandhi on the way to the railway station accompanied by the Chairman of the Reception Committee, Gangadharrao Deshpande

*Courtesy: Y. E. Moledina*

Gandhi, the Congress President, at the annual session of the Muslim League held at the Globe Theatre, Bombay, when he addressed the house on December 31, 1924. Prominent persons present are Motilal Nehru, Dr. Kitchlew, M. A. Jinnah, Mahomed Ali, Mrs. Naidu and Shaukat Ali

Nehru, Lala Lajpat Rai, the Ali brothers, Maulana Azad, Swami Shraddhanand, Hasrat Mohani, Kelkar and Dr. Moonje. Answering the charge that the Mahasabha was a communal organization, the president said: "It would be a shame if any Hindu opposed the National Congress. Their object was to supplement and strengthen the Congress. The necessity for organizing the Mahasabha had arisen because the Congress being a political body could not deal with questions which affected various communities in social and other non-political spheres."

The Belgaum Congress was a big affair. It was a triumph of organization and Dr. Hardikar's volunteers impressed Gandhi a lot. The roads were broad and well kept. The huge pavilion with a marble fountain in front of it seemed to invite all who would enter it. "The sanitary arrangements though quite good needed still more scientific treatment than what they had," pointed out Gandhi. "The method of the disposal of used water was very primitive." He had bargained for a khadi hut but he "was insulted with a khadi palace". The extravagance came from a generous heart but "forty years' tradition cannot be undone in a day if no one likely to gain a hearing will repeatedly criticize it." The Congress was as usual an annual fair for large visitors who got instruction along with amusement. The musical concert was a treat to thousands. The lantern lectures tracing the tragic history of the ruin of the great national weaving industry and the possibilities of its revival were given by Satish Dasgupta. There was also an exhibition of indigenous arts and industries.

The Gandhi-Nehru-Das pact was finally ratified at Belgaum and non-co-operation was given a go-by. The Congress franchise was altered making spinning a qualification instead of four annas per year. The exodus of the Hindus from Kohat was deplored and the Muslim residents were exhorted to assure the Hindu minority of full protection and the Hindus were advised not to return except upon an honourable invitation from the Muslims.

Gandhi's presidential address was the shortest in the Congress record and was delivered only in parts to the assembly, the address having been circulated was taken as read. He began: "Friends, it was after much misgiving that I accepted the burden of the honour you have done me today. The developments, both internal and external, have necessitated my acceptance of the burden."

Gandhi commented on external affairs and wove them into the pattern of happenings in India. He said: "I regard this repression as a chronic symptom of a chronic disease. The European dominance and Asiatic subjection is the formula. Sometimes it is stated still more cryptically as white versus black. Kipling miscalled the white man's yoke as the white man's burden. In the Malaya Peninsula the colour bar that was thought to be temporary has now almost become a permanent institution. The Mauritius planter must get Indian labour without let or hindrance. The Kenya Europeans successfully lord it over Indians who have a prior right to be there. The Union of South Africa would drive out every Indian if it safely could, in total disregard of past obligations. In all these cases the Government of India and the Imperial Government are not helpless; they are unwilling, or not so insistent as they ought to be on the protection of Indian settlers.

"The attempt to crush the indomitable spirit of the Akalis is a symptom of the same disease. They have poured their blood like water for the sake of a cause they hold as dear as life itself. They may have erred. If they have, it is they who have bled in the process. They have hurt no one else. Nankana Saheb, Guru-ka-Bagh, and Jaito will bear witness to their courage and their mute sufferings and martyrdom. But the Governor of the Punjab is reported to have vowed that he will crush the Akalis.

"One hears that cruel repression is crushing the Burmese spirit. Egypt fares no better than we do. A mad Egyptian kills a British officer—certainly a detestable crime. The punishment is not only a detestable crime but it is an outrage upon humanity. Egypt has nearly lost all it got. A whole nation has been mercilessly punished for the crime of one man. It may be that the murder had the sympathy of the Egyptians. Would that justify terrorism by a power well able to protect its interests without it?

"The repression in Bengal is, therefore, not an extraordinary thing. We must treat its periodic eruption in some shape or other, or in some province or other, as our normal condition, till we come to our own."

He reaffirmed his faith in the charkha, Hindu-Muslim unity, and the removal of untouchability. He dwelt upon the unification of political parties, and especially the complete co-ordination between the Swarajists and the no-changers. He traced the course of the

non-co-operation movement and pointed out why it was necessary to cry halt at this hour of disunion and weakness. But his own faith in civil disobedience still stood: "I swear by civil disobedience. But civil disobedience for the attainment of swaraj is an impossibility unless and until we have attained the power of achieving boycott of foreign cloth."

Then he defined Indian's immediate goal: "Our goal must be the removal, at the earliest possible moment, of any communal or sectional representation. A common electorate must impartially elect its representatives on the sole ground of merit. Our services must be likewise impartially manned by qualified men and women. But till that time comes and communal jealousies or preferences become a thing of the past, minorities who suspect the motives of majorities must be allowed their way. The majorities must set the example of self-sacrifice."

As regards India's political goal, Gandhi was for "a federation of friendly interdependent states rather than for independence":

"In my opinion, if the British Government mean what they say and honestly help us to equality, it would be a greater triumph than a complete severance of the British connection. I would, therefore, strive for swaraj within the empire but would not hesitate to sever all connection, if severance became a necessity through Britain's own fault. I would thus throw the burden of separation on the British people."

Gandhi ended his address with an affirmation of his faith: "As a Congressman wishing to keep the Congress intact, I advise suspension of non-co-operation, for I see that the nation is not ready for it. But as an individual, I cannot, and will not, do so as long as the Government remains what it is. It is not merely policy with me, it is an article of faith. Non-co-operation and civil disobedience are but different branches of the same tree called satyagraha. It is my *kalpadrum—jam-i-jam*—the Universal Provider. Satyagraha is search for Truth; and God is Truth. Ahimsa or non-violence is the light that reveals that Truth to me. Swaraj for me is part of the Truth. This satyagraha did not fail me in South Africa, Kheda, or Champaran and in other cases I could mention. It excludes all violence or hate. Therefore, I cannot and will not hate Englishmen. Nor will I bear their yoke. I must fight unto death the unholy attempt to impose British methods and British institutions on India.

But I combat the attempt with non-violence. I believe in the capacity of India to offer non-violent battle to the English rulers. The experiment has not failed. It has succeeded, but not to the extent we had hoped and desired. I do not despair. On the contrary, I believe that India will come to her own in the near future, and that only through satyagraha. The proposed suspension is part of the experiment. Non-co-operation need never be resumed if the programme as sketched by me can be fulfilled. Non-violent non-co-operation in some form or other, whether through the Congress or without it, will be resumed if the programme fails. I have said that satyagraha never fails and that one perfect satyagrahi is enough to vindicate truth. Let us all strive to be perfect satyagrahis. The striving does not require any quality unattainable by the lowliest among us. For, satyagraha is an attribute of the spirit within. It is latent in every one of us. Like swaraj it is our birthright. Let us know it."

In concluding the proceedings of the Congress, he said:

"I want you to transfer all this noble affection, all this generosity that you have shown me, to the thing which you and I hold dear, to the thing which alone binds you and me together, and that is swaraj. If we want swaraj we must know the conditions of swaraj. You have endorsed those conditions in the resolution moved by Das on the pact. Every one knows the conditions and I want you to fulfil them to the letter and in spirit and insist upon others that they will fulfil those conditions not by force but by love. Exert all the influence and all the pressure that love can exert upon everyone concerned. Go throughout your districts and spread the message of khaddar, the message of Hindu-Muslim unity, the message of anti-untouchability and take up in hand the youth of the country and make them real soldiers of swaraj. But you will not do it, if the no-changers and the Swarajists still bear malice against each other, and if they have jealousy against one another. It will be possible only, if you bury the hatchet, leave all the jealousies, all anger and all that is bad in your heart. Bury it underground, cremate it, do whatever you like, but take away the sacred resolution with you that let heavens fall but the tie that binds today or has bound the Swarajists and the no-changers shall never snap."

## *Tour Of Preparation*

1925

Gandhi proposed during 1925 to carry no motion or proposal that might be of a party character: "Neither the spinning wheel nor the boycott of foreign cloth can be expeditiously worked in the teeth of opposition from within the Congress ranks. Indeed we must strive to gain the support of non-Congressmen for the national constructive programme. They may not like spinning or wearing khaddar as part of the franchise, but I have not met many Liberals who have any objection to have spinning as a cottage industry or to the use of khaddar as such and apart from the franchise. It may be constitutionally impossible for all parties to accept the existing Congress creed or the new franchise, and therefore to become Congressmen. But I hope that the existence of the creed or the new franchise will not be a bar against joint work wherever it is possible."

To achieve unity between the two wings of the Congress was Gandhi's objective. The responsibility of nominating the Working Committee was thrown by the A.-I.C.C. on the shoulders of Gandhi, Das and Nehru. Gandhi deliberately omitted the names of no-changers like Rajagopalachari, Vallabhbhai and Banker from the Working Committee. A common method of working the common programme had to be achieved. He reasoned: "In a Working Committee with a decided majority of no-changers strong resolutions can no doubt be carried for khaddar work but they cannot carry much weight with those who have reluctantly accepted the khaddar franchise. Whereas resolutions of a Working Committee in which the predominant voice is that of the Swarajists, though they may be mild are sure to carry far greater weight with the Swarajists. And my business is to carry the latter with me whole-heartedly. I want to act upon them and I want them to act upon me. Nothing can be better than that the Swarajist leaders and amongst them the ablest and most uncompromising opponent of the spinning

franchise and I should be thrown together in an atmosphere in which we must pull together."

Gandhi took Kelkar and Aney on the Working Committee, along with Das, Motilal Nehru, Mrs. Naidu, Mahomed Ali, Azad, Sardar Mangal Singh and Dr. Varadarajulu Naidu. Revashankar Jhaveri and Jamnalal Bajaj were joint treasurers. Jawaharlal Nehru was again elected, at Gandhi's insistence, the working secretary of the All-India Congress Committee.

The new franchise created heart-burning. Mrs. Besant who was allowed to speak from the Congress platform, after the resolution was passed, expressed some doubts: "I promised your president that I would spin half an hour every morning and I have done it. But I cannot pledge myself to spin two thousand yards of yarn every month. I cannot work at that rate and I will not buy a substitute, for I think that is not fair spinning and when it is not contributing the work of your own hands, I do not care."

Gandhi cleared the doubts regarding the spinning franchise on January 1, 1925 through *Young India*:

"The Congress has taken a tremendous forward step or as some say committed a tremendous folly at the instance of a madman. It is methodical labour that the Congress requires from every Congressman. If he is unwilling to do that labour, he has to hire it. The task is difficult. If it were easy, it would not be possible to expect the grand result one expects from its successful working. Even when it was a mere matter of collecting four annas per year, it was found to be difficult. And today we have not, on the Congress register, in all the provinces fifty thousand such members. Now the Congress expects every one to spin 2,000 yards per month or to get that quantity spun for him by another. Thus the workers have to keep in continuous touch with the spinners. Therein lies, in my opinion, the strength of the franchise. It gives the people political education of the high type...Now throughout India, at the lowest computation, there are at least five million wheels working. These spinners can easily belong to the Congress. Those who are taking work from them can invite them to devote half an hour of their time to the nation by spinning at the wheel for that time. Those who are now spinning have to ask their friends and neighbours to do likewise and become Congress members. This can be best done by each worker founding spinning clubs of twenty. The honestest

unwilling spinner will seek out a member of his own family to do the spinning for him. The next class of unwilling member will himself engage a professional spinner to spin for him. And the last class is that which will buy its yarn from the market and run the risk of having spurious yarn sold for genuine. My hope is that there will be very few men and women who will be unwilling to spin for the sake of the Congress and the country. The word 'unwilling' has found place in the franchise for the sake of meeting the difficulties of those who are old Congressmen and whom I would not like to leave the Congress, even if they were willing to do so. But I hope that unwillingness will not be encouraged. Mere production of hand-spun yarn will not make the idle and the starving work. It is the atmosphere of manual work, that too consisting of hand-spinning that is required to make the millions retake to the wheel. And that atmosphere can best be produced by all Congressmen regarding it as an honour for themselves personally to spin."

His appeal had an excellent response. "I promise to introduce ten thousand charkhas in the city of Madura before 30th April," wrote a Congressman. Maulana Zafar Ali Khan promised that he would get five thousand Muslim spinners as members by the end of Gandhi's term of office. Gandhi told the maulana that it was a solemn promise and if it was not fulfilled he would have to fast. "I do not want you to commit suicide," said the maulana. "I would not have made the promise, if I had not meant it or its fulfilment was impossible." The provinces vied with each other to top the honours' list, but Gujarat beat them all.

The first thing Gandhi did after the Congress session was a tour of intense preparation. Early in the year 1925 he visited villages in Kathiawad, Central India, Bengal, Malabar, and Travancore. Fiery and passionate words flowed from him: "I travel because I fancy that the masses want to meet me. I certainly want to meet them. I deliver my simple message to them in few words and they and I are satisfied. It penetrates the mass mind slowly but surely."

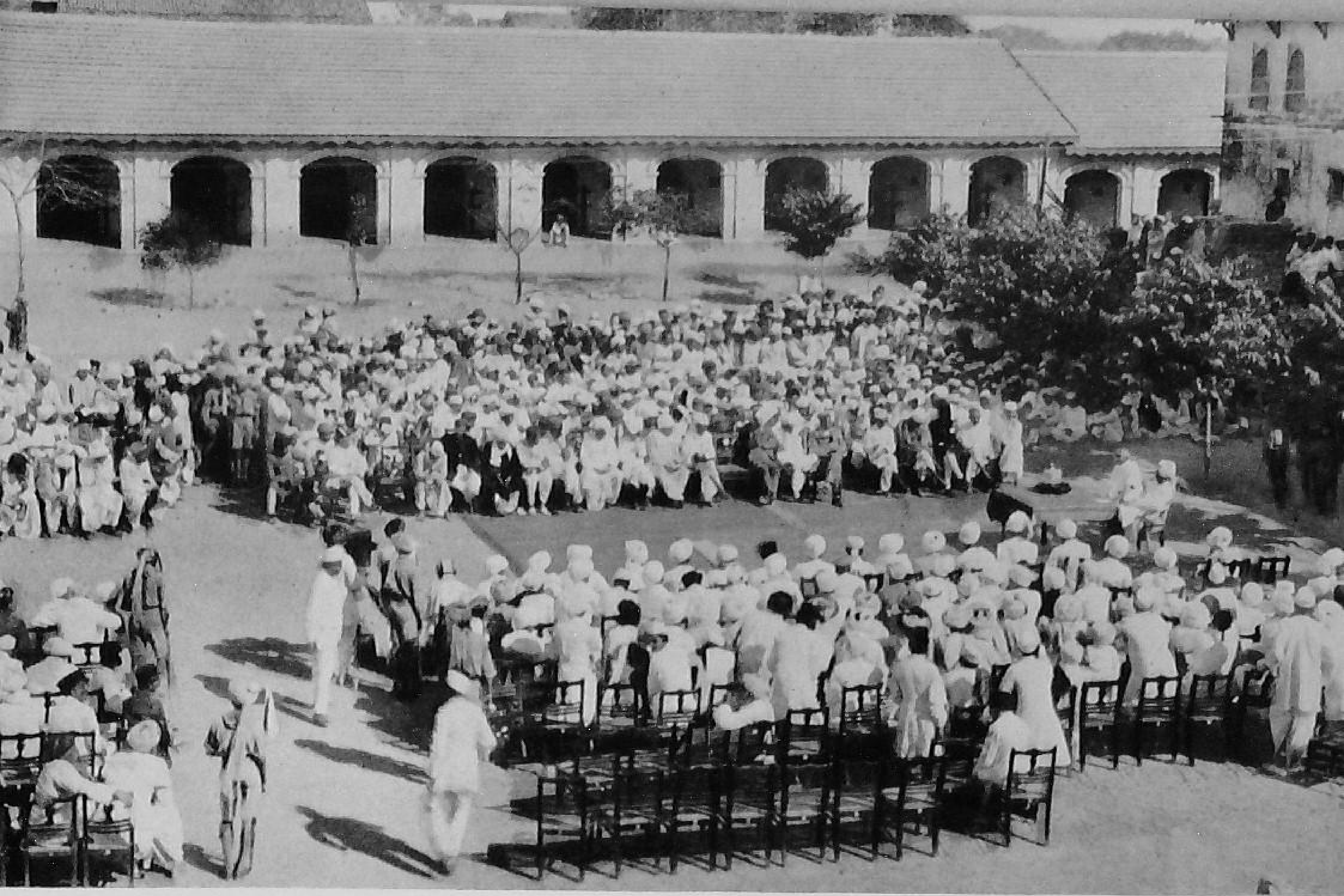
The untouchables, all barefoot in the baking dust of the treeless Kathiawad roads, greeted the Congress President. Their complaint was: "Look yonder at the well where they are drawing water. We may not use that well and we are too poor to construct one ourselves. We are only at liberty to use the cattle trough, attached to the well, and that too when it is filled." Gandhi comforted them,

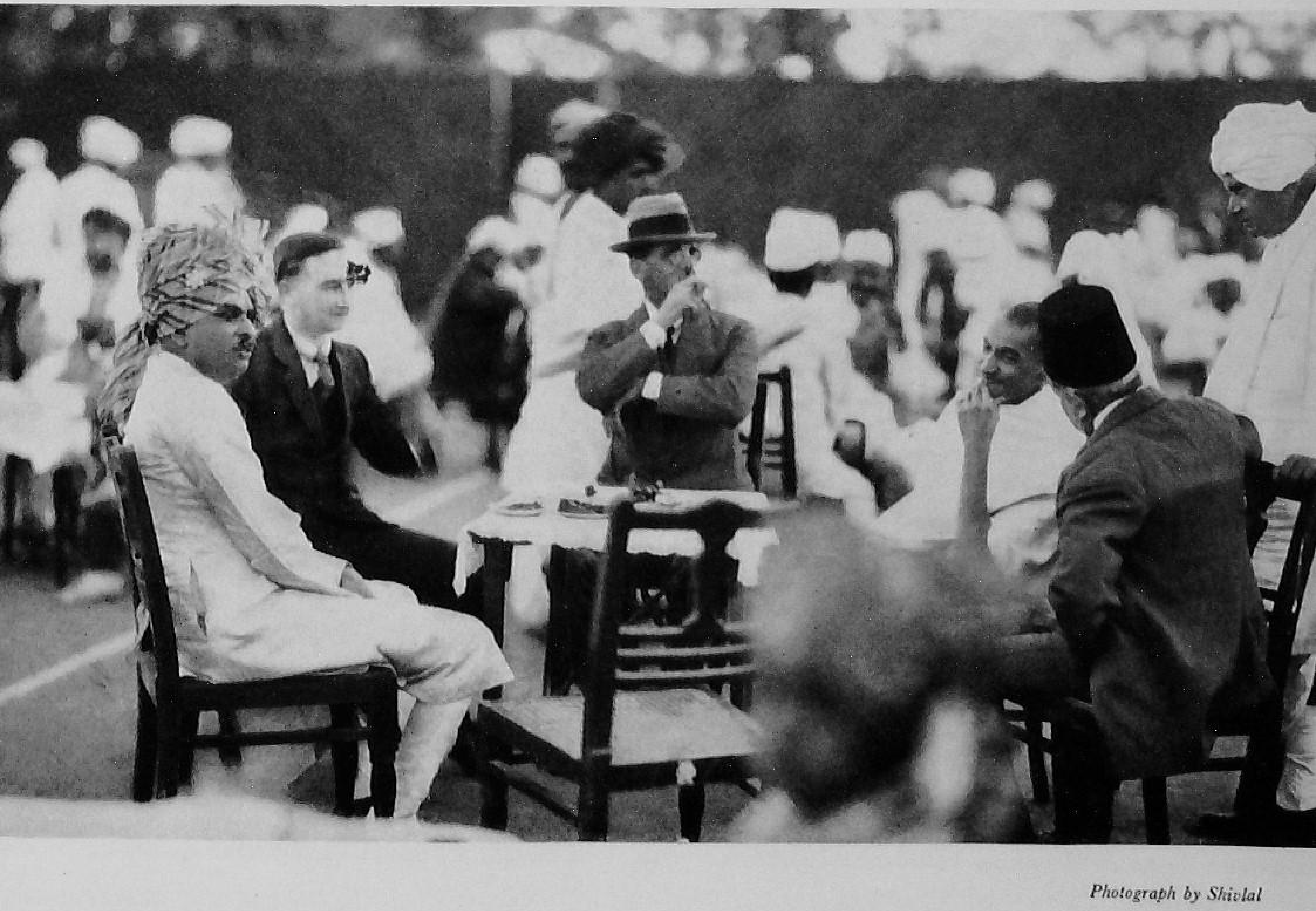
reasoned with them. If the orthodox Hindu refused to get out of the vicious circle, no less did the untouchable. "I am bound to see to it," said he "that you get clean water to drink and to bathe and wash, but will not you give up eating carrion? It is such a filthy habit and so long as you don't give it up, I may continue to touch you but I cannot hope to succeed with the orthodox Brahmins." They pleaded guilty to the charge of using liquor and mill-woven cloth, but they tried to make out a defence for using carrion, "If we are expected to dispose of dead cattle, you may not expect us to abstain from carrion." It was a poor excuse. "But you will find Brahmins and high-class Hindus in charge of tanneries in cities," he argued. "You may find me one day carrying on a tannery, but you won't find them or me using carrion."

At Mangrol, Gandhi insisted on the orthodox leaving rather than allow the untouchables to sit in a separate corner to hear him. With little parables, stories and rebukes, he effected a transformation till a Dhed musician sang in a Jain gentleman's household. He raised money for a village temple for untouchables. It was an education in itself. Confronting a little girl, loaded with a heavy silver ornament on her neck, he said, "Is not this an ugly encumbrance? Shall I take it away?" She gladly parted with it and her parents also encouraged her. Thus several families came in his clutches and off went their ornaments too.

A priest came forward and protested against anti-untouchability campaign. "I advise the people in matters big and small," he said to Gandhi. "I am a fortune-teller too."

"And can you tell my fortune?" asked Gandhi. "Right enough," rejoined the priest unperturbed, and he asked an urchin to bring his calendar from his house. The calendar came, and Gandhi asked him to tell his fortune. "Well sir, you tell the fortune of the whole nation, and who am I to tell yours?" said the priest, a little softened. "No, no, please do," insisted Gandhi. "No, it would be presumptuous but I would tell the fortune of the man yonder." "Well then, just bring me the calendar and let me see how you practise your profession." He brought it. "Just read this, please," said Gandhi, and the old man blurted out something from memory, his eyes still on the calendar. "But I want you to read what is there," said Gandhi pointing to two or three lines in the calendar. "Don't ask me to do it," said he unabashed, "I can't read it, it is my belly-filler. That is





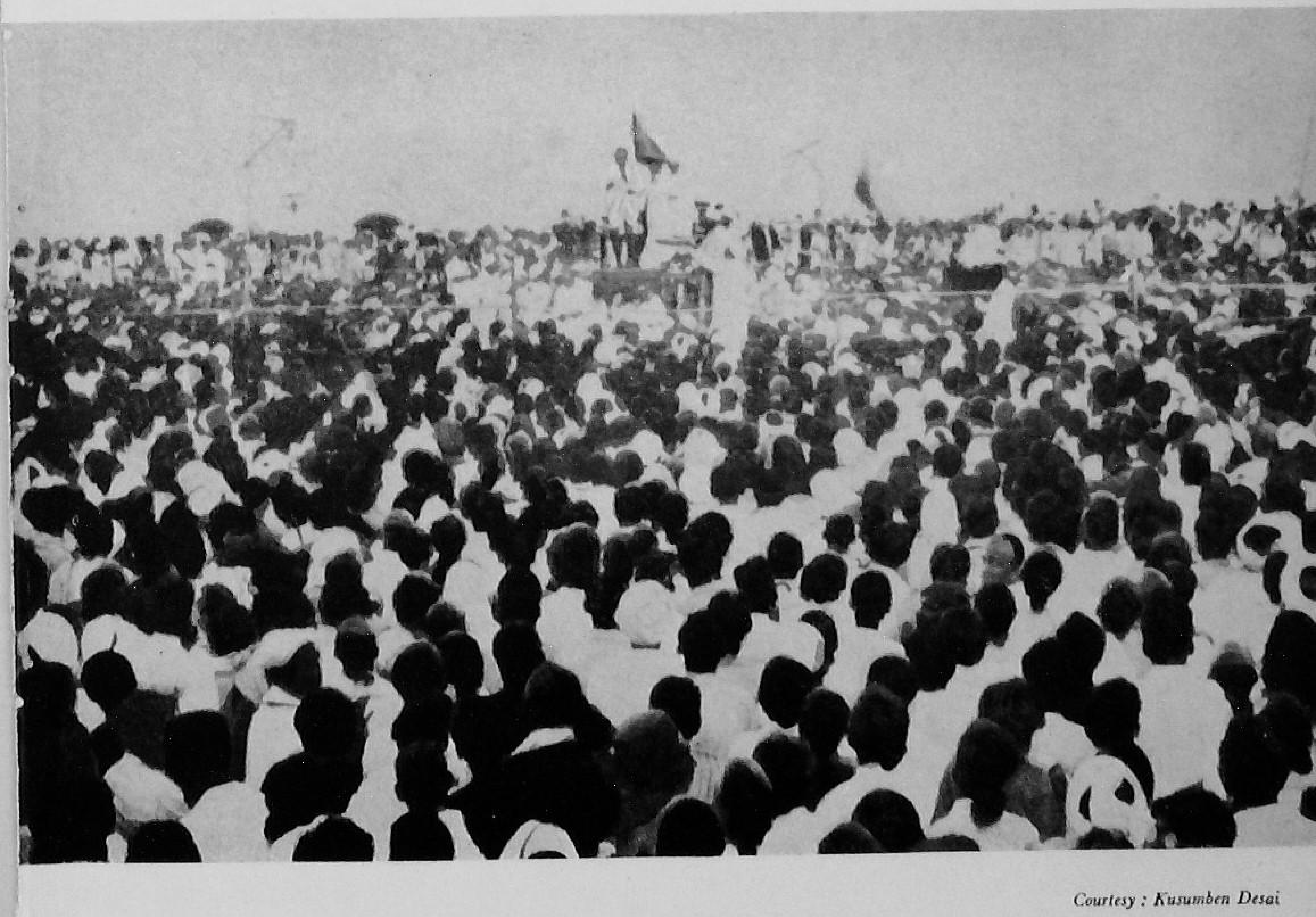
*Photograph by Shivlal*

A special durbar meeting to honour Gandhi convened by Lakhajiraj, Thakore Saheb of Rajkot, February 15, 1925

Garden party in honour of Gandhi given by the Thakore Saheb of Rajkot

*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

The Mayor of Madras received Gandhi on the occasion of the presentation of a civic address at the Corporation Hall, March 1925



*Courtesy : Kusumben Desai*

Gandhi at a public meeting in Madras, March 1925
At another mammoth meeting held on the beach of Madras, March 7, 1925

*Courtesy : Kusumben Desai*

Gandhi addressing the beach meeting—on the dais are S. Satyamurti and Srinivas Iyengar

all. And the mere possession of it helps me to make a living as it helps so many Brahmins."

So this was their god, and in a few brief pitiless sentences Gandhi broke his feet of clay and adjured his followers to cast the unworthy leader away, leaving him to starve if he still persisted in fooling them, and battening on their credulity.

At Soitra, a conference was held and resolutions were passed about abstaining from drink and wearing khaddar. Many villagers had come from long distances to listen to him. There were nearly ten thousand women present. Whilst the arrangements were simple and effective, those at Vedchi surpassed all expectations. Gandhi wrote: "The remark immediately escaped my lips that I had not seen a conference so grand as at Vedchi for its simplicity, naturalness and artistic beauty. He who selected the site and conceived the whole arrangement was undoubtedly an artist child of nature. The spot selected lay on a river bank. The river ran between a row of homely hills shaded with trees and shrubs. The bed of the river was sandy not muddy. The platform was erected in the waters of the river. It rose nearly eight feet high. A sand-bag was the first step to the platform. The whole meeting lay in front of the platform, the people occupying even the ridge of the hill opposite. Decorations were all bamboo and green leaves. There was not a single portrait arranged anywhere, not a scrap of paper was used for decoration, and not even yarn. Yarn is out of place for such decorations and much too valuable to be wasted. The canopy was split bamboo and green leaves. The effect was soothingly beautiful. On either side of the road that lay in front of the platform, huge masses of men and women over twelve thousand sat in perfect silence."

The people of Gujarat overwhelmed him with love. "I am an ordinary mortal, as much exposed to affections and passions as any of you," he said. "But I always try to control them. I demand love which soothes but does not overwhelm. I want the fire of that love to purify and not to burn me. Let all your love be converted into work in fulfilment of the national programme."

On the occasion of the Kathiawad Political Conference, held at Bhavnagar on January 8, Gandhi expressed his views on the duty of the princes and their subjects. For the first time he dealt with the subject at length and added: "It would be unfair if the views which I express as president here are imputed to the Congress

simply because I happen to lead it also." Addressing the conference in Gujarati, he said:

"I have often declared that the Congress should generally adopt a policy of non-interference with regard to questions affecting the states. At a time when the people of British India are fighting for their own freedom, for them to interfere with the affairs of the Indian states would only be to betray impotence. Just as the National Congress cannot have any effective voice in the relations between Indian states and the British Government, even so will its interference be ineffective as to the relations between the Indian states and their subjects.

"Still the people in British India as well as in the Indian states are one, for India is one. There is no difference, for example, between the needs and the manners and customs of Indians in Baroda and of Indians in Ahmedabad. The existence of different policies in connection with one and the same people is a state of things which cannot last for any length of time. Consequently even without any interference by the Congress, the unseen pressure of circumstances alone must lead to the unification of policies in spite of multitude of separate jurisdictions. Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization.

"But I am firmly of opinion that so long as British India is not free, so long as the people of British India have not attained real power, so long will India, British as well as native, remain in distracted condition. The existence of a third power depends upon a continuance of such distraction. We can put our house in order when British India has attained swaraj. British India under swaraj will not wish for the destruction of the Indian states, but will be helpful to them. And the Indian states will adopt a corresponding attitude towards British India.

"The present condition in the states is in my opinion somewhat pitiable. For the princes have no independence. Real power does not consist in the ability to inflict capital punishment upon the subjects, but in the will and the ability to protect the subjects against the world. Today the Indian states do not have this ability, and consequently by disuse the will also is as good as gone. On the other hand their power to oppress the subjects appears to have increased. As there is anarchy in the empire, there is anarchy in the states subordinate to the empire. The anarchy in the states is not so much

due to the princes and the chiefs as it is very largely to the present condition in India. I definitely hold that all will be well if one of the component parts of India becomes self-governing.

"It is obvious that British India must lead the way. The people there have a consciousness of their horrible condition and a desire to be free from it, and as knowledge follows in the wake of desire, so those people only who wish to be rid of their peril will find out and apply the means of deliverance. When the auspicious day of the freedom of British India arrives, the relation of ruler and ruled in the Indian states will not cease but will be purified."

He criticized the princes' extravagance and their indifference to the welfare of their subjects. But he restrained the conference from passing resolutions regarding grievances and advised the delegates to cultivate self-discipline and capacity to suffer and he promised to use his ability and resourcefulness to get the grievances remedied. He requested the people to concentrate on the spinning wheel, Hindu-Muslim unity, removal of untouchability, and abstention from drinks and drugs.

Concluding the address he remarked: "I know that to many my speech will appear incomplete and even insipid. But I cannot give any practical or useful advice by going outside my province. I am fascinated by the law of love. My swaraj takes note of the bhangis, Dheds, Dublas and the weakest of the weak, and except the spinning wheel I know no other thing which befriends all these. I have not discussed your local questions of which I have not sufficient knowledge. I have not dealt with the questions of the ideal constitution for the state as you alone can be its fashioners. My duty lies in discovering and employing means by which the nation may evolve the strength to enforce its will. When once the nation is conscious of its strength it will find its own way or make it. That prince is acceptable to me who becomes a prince among his people's servants. The subjects are the real masters. Such being my ideal there is room for Indian states in swaraj as conceived by me and there is full protection guaranteed to the subjects for their rights. The true source of rights is duty. I have, therefore, spoken only about the duties of princes as well as the people."

On January 23, Gandhi proceeded to Delhi to preside over the All-Parties committee meeting. Lively discussions took place on his proposal to appoint a sub-committee to suggest the terms of

agreement between Hindus and Muslims and among all political parties and also to draw up a scheme of swaraj. The conference was attended by a large number of leaders including Motilal Nehru, Jinnah, the Ali brothers, Mrs. Besant, Mrs. Naidu, Swami Shraddhanand, Rajendra Prasad, Jawaharlal Nehru, Lala Lajpat Rai, Pandit Kunzru, Chintamani, Jayakar and Maulana Azad. After heated discussion, a fully representative sub-committee, consisting of forty members, was appointed. The first sub-committee meeting, held in February, found that the agreement on any really important point in issue between the two communities was not possible and had to adjourn *sine die.*

"The present failure may be a stepping-stone to success," said Gandhi, "if those who have no fear of one another will be true to their faith and try to work at a solution." The atmosphere for a real solution was lacking. The conflict between the Ali brothers and Gandhi was revealed to the public for the first time through *Young India* of March 26. The differences were fundamental and could not be bridged over. Two statements over Kohat were issued separately. Gandhi wrote: "I came to the conclusion that the public which had hitherto known the Ali brothers and me to be always in agreement about so many public things should know that we too might differ on some matters, but without suspecting each other of conscious bias or wilful perversion of facts and without mutual affection being in any way affected." It was the beginning of the end of friendship between the Ali brothers and Gandhi.

After his tour in North India Gandhi turned towards the south, reaching Madras on March 7. If the problem of Hindu-Muslim confronted him in the north, it was the untouchability issue he had to tackle in the south, the strongest citadel of orthodoxy. On March 9 he reached Vaikom where a long-drawn satyagraha was going on for a year.

It was the Vaikom satyagraha that for the first time had revealed to India the depth of the evil of untouchability: if the so-called untouchables walked on the roads round or converging to the sacred temples, the temples would be polluted, or as the position was later revised, the devout temple-goers would be polluted by their shadow. And among these so-called untouchables were men and women belonging to the Ezhava caste, numbering about a million and as cultured and educated as the proudest in the land; Pulayas,

numbering three hundred thousand were agricultural labourers, without whose labours the Caste Hindus could not exist for a day; pariahs, numbering three hundred thousand, the product of whose labours could be made use of even in the temples; Shanars, whose labours too were essential for the jaggery which was used by all communities. The immediate objective of the satyagraha was very limited—not temple entry—but only the opening of all the roads round the temple which were also open to non-Hindus.

Vaikom was a test case so far as Travancore and for that matter Malabar was concerned. It affected the common rights of one-sixth of the entire population of Travancore. The state supported the orthodox community with the police aid; barricades were erected and the police threw a cordon round the temple. The volunteers had started satyagraha by defying the orders of the local magistracy forbidding entry on certain roads around the temples.

Practically from week to week Gandhi had followed the progress of the struggle, guiding the satyagrahis and often cheering them through the columns of *Young India*: "What is a year's suffering on the part of the few reformers in their attempts to break down the iron wall of prejudice? To lose patience is to lose the battle." This was followed by a visit to Vaikom, where Gandhi stayed with the satyagrahis, and explained to them the implications of true satyagraha:

"I would ask you to forget the political aspect of the programme. Political consequences of this struggle there are, but you are not to concern yourselves with them. If you do, you will miss the true result and miss the political consequences, and when the real heat of the struggle is touched you will be found wanting. I am anxious, even if it frightens you, to explain to you the true nature of the struggle. It is a struggle deeply religious for the Hindus. We are endeavouring to rid Hinduism of its greatest blot. The prejudice we have to fight against is an agelong prejudice. The struggle for the opening of the roads round the temple, which we hold to be public, to the unapproachables is but a small skirmish in the big battle. If our struggle was to end with the opening of the roads in Vaikom, you may be sure I would not have bothered my head about it. If, therefore, you think that the struggle is to end with opening of the roads in Vaikom to the unapproachables, you are mistaken. The roads must be opened. They have got to be opened. But that will be

the beginning of the end. The end is to get all such roads throughout Travancore to be opened to the unapproachables; and not only that, but we expect that our efforts may result in amelioration of the general condition of the untouchables and unapproachables. That will require tremendous sacrifice.

"For, our aim is not to do things by violence to opponents. That will be conversion by violence or compulsion, and if we import compulsion in matters of religion, there is no doubt that we shall be committing suicide. We should carry on this struggle on the lines of strict non-violence, that is, suffering in our own persons. That is the meaning of satyagraha. The question is whether you are capable of every suffering that may be imposed upon you or may be your lot in the journey towards the goal. Even whilst you are suffering, you may have no bitterness—no trace of it—against your opponents. And I tell you it is not a mechanical act at all. On the contrary I want you to feel like loving your opponents, and the way to do it is to give them the same credit for honesty of purpose which you would claim for yourself. I know that it is a difficult task. I confess that it was a difficult task for me yesterday whilst I was talking to those friends who insisted on their right to exclude the unapproachables from the temple roads. I confess there was selfishness behind their talk. How then was I to credit them with honesty of purpose? I was thinking of this thing yesterday and also this morning, and this is what I did. I asked myself: 'Wherein was their selfishness or self-interest? It is true that they have their ends to serve. But so have we our ends to serve. Only we consider our ends to be pure and, therefore, selfless. But who is to determine where selflessness ends and selfishness begins? Selflessness may be the purest form of selfishness.' I do not say this for the sake of argument. But that is what I really feel. I am considering their condition of mind from their point of view and not my own. Had they not been Hindus they would not have talked as they did yesterday. Immediately we begin to think of things as our opponents think of them, we shall be able to do them full justice. I know that this requires a detached state of mind, and it is a state very difficult to reach. Nevertheless for a satyagrahi it is absolutely essential. Three-fourths of the miseries and misunderstandings in the world will disappear, if we step into the shoes of our adversaries and understand their standpoint. We will then agree with our adversaries quickly or think of them charitably. In our case

there is no question of our agreeing with them quickly as our ideals are radically different. But we may be charitable to them and believe that they actually mean what they say. They do not want to open the roads to the unapproachables. Now whether it is their self-interest or ignorance that tells them to say so, we really believe that it is wrong of them to say so. Our business is to show them that they are in the wrong; and we should do so by our suffering. I have found that mere appeal to reason does not answer where prejudices are agelong and based on supposed religious authority. Reason has to be strengthened by suffering, and suffering opens the eyes of understanding. Therefore, there must be no trace of compulsion in our acts. We must not be impatient, and we must have an undying faith in the means we are adopting. The means we are adopting just now are that we approach the four barricades and as we are stopped there, we sit down and spin away from day to day; and we must believe that through it the roads must be opened. I know that it is a difficult and slow process. But if you believe in the efficacy of satyagraha you will rejoice in this slow torture and suffering, and you will not feel the discomfort of your position as you go and sit in the boiling sun from day to day. If you have faith in the cause and the means and in God, the hot sun will be cool for you. You must not be tired and say 'how long', and never get irritated. That is only a portion of your penance for the sin for which Hinduism is responsible."

Gandhi interviewed the orthodox Nambudris, and paid a visit to Trivandrum where he waited on Her Highness and interviewed the dewan. His presence in Vaikom focussed attention of the whole of India on the movement and was instrumental in the Travancore Assembly passing a resolution favouring the reform and lastly in eliciting a considered reply from the dewan.

The struggle went on for a number of months before the authorities relented and opened the roads on three sides of the temple. The Vaikom settlement was "flimsy" as Gandhi described it but the settlement was "a document between the people and the state constituting a big step in the direction of liberty". And when the authorities removed both barricades and pickets, the only enemy remaining was orthodox opinion.

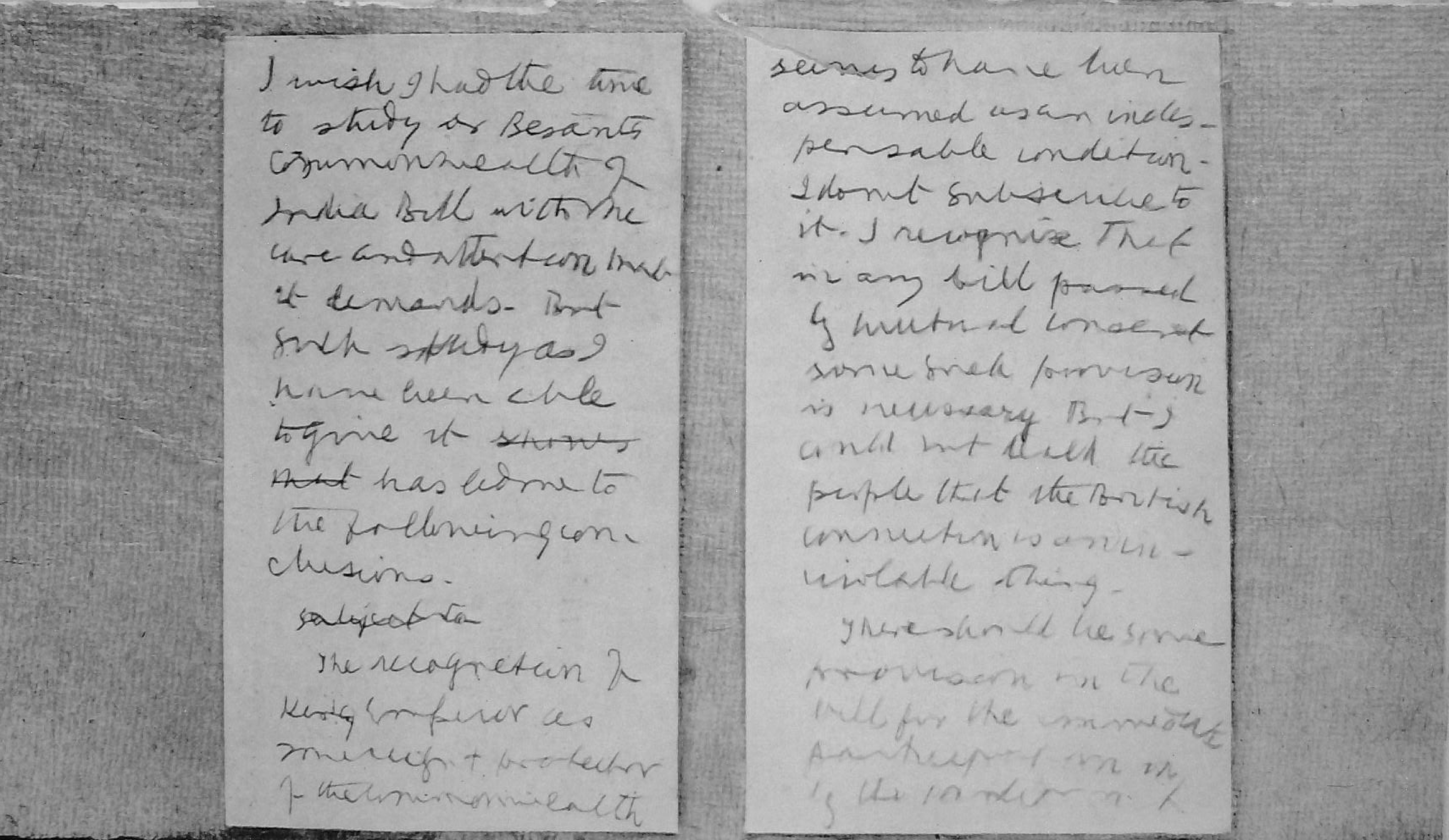
Gandhi's stay in Travancore was full of incessant journeyings and meetings. He entered Vaikom which lies almost on the northern border of Travancore and toured down to the extreme south, upto

Cape Comorin. The picturesque country captivated him and more so the women of Malabar: "I must own that I have fallen in love with the women of Malabar. I have not seen the women of India so simply yet elegantly dressed as the women of Malabar."

At the end of March Gandhi left Travancore with many happy memories to resume work in his own province. For a fortnight he toured through Navsari and Broach and he spoke everywhere on the constructive programme. "I must apply myself to preparing efficient non-violent workers with a living faith in hand-spinning and khaddar, Hindu-Muslim unity and, if they are Hindus, in the removal of untouchability also. For the current year at any rate, this is the national programme and no other."

At the end of April he reached Bengal where in consideration of his health the organizers arranged first-class saloon for his journey. He objected: "My opinion is that my tour cannot do much good, if I must be thus wrapped in cotton wool. I must either live or travel like the millions of poor people as far as possible or cease to travel at all in the public interest. I am certain that I can no more effectively deliver my message to the millions by travelling not even double but fivefold first than the Viceroy can rule over the hearts of India's millions from his unapproachable Simla heights."

Addressing a meeting in Calcutta on May 1, Gandhi referred to the negotiations which were said to be proceeding between Lord Birkenhead and Das but disclaimed all knowledge of them. He said that instead of entering into diplomatic relations with the matchless diplomats from England, he preferred to concentrate on constructive programme for developing the power of India from within. Referring to the Hindu-Muslim question he said: "I have admitted my incompetence. I have admitted that I have been found wanting as a physician prescribing a cure for this malady. I do not find that either Hindus or Muslims are ready to accept my cure, and, therefore, I simply nowadays confine myself to a passing mention of this problem and content myself by saying that some day or other we Hindus and Muslims will have to come together, if we want the deliverance of our country. And if it is to be our lot that before we can come together we must shed one another's blood, then I say sooner we do so the better it is for us. If we propose to break one another's heads, let us do so in manly way." Concluding the speech he said: "So long as untouchability disfigures Hinduism, so long



I wish I had the time to study Mrs. Besant's Commonwealth of India Bill with the care and attention which it demands. But such study as I have been able to give it has led me to the following conclusions.

The recognition of King Emperor as sovereign & protector of the Commonwealth seems to have been assumed as an indispensable condition. I do not subscribe to it. I recognise that in any bill passed by mutual consent some such provision is necessary. But I would not teach the people that the British connection is an inviolable thing.

There should be some provision in the Bill for the Commonwealth

Courtesy : Jamnadas Dwarkadas

Gandhi on Mrs. Besant's Commonwealth of India Bill, 1925

*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi at the wheel, Sabarmati Ashram, 1925
Gandhi in a procession at Mangrol, Kathiawad, April 1925

*Courtesy: Nandita Kripalani*

Gandhi at Santiniketan, with Tagore and Andrews, May 29, 1925

From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi and Dr. P. C. Ray participated in mass spinning, Mirzapur Park, Calcutta, May 1925
Gandhi at Patna railway station on the way to the A.I.C.C. meeting, September 1925

do I hold the attainment of swaraj to be an utter impossibility. Supposing it were a gift descending from Downing Street to India, that gift would be a curse upon this land, if we do not get rid of this curse of untouchability."

On May 2 the Bengal Provincial Conference met under the chairmanship of Das at Faridpur. He was ailing, he was weak and his voice had lost its strength, but he was determined to carry on. In his address he offered his hand of co-operation to the Government on certain terms: "In the first place, the Government should divest itself of its discretionary powers of constraint, and follow it up by proclaiming a general amnesty of all political prisoners. In the next place, the Government should guarantee to us the fullest recognition of our right to the establishment of swaraj within the commonwealth in the near future, and that in the meantime, till swaraj comes, a sure and sufficient foundation of such swaraj should be laid at once. What is a sufficient foundation is and must necessarily be a matter of negotiation and settlement. To the British I say, you can have peace today on terms that are honourable both to you and to us. But let us face the fact that it may be necessary for us to have recourse to civil disobedience if all hopes of reconciliation fail. And I can see little hope of India ever being ready for civil disobedience until she is prepared to work Mahatma Gandhi's constructive programme to the fullest extent. The end, however, must be kept in view, for freedom must be won."

On May 3 Gandhi participated in the conference. He said he had read an English version of Das' Bengali speech while in Calcutta and found that Das had pilfered his thought but not the language. If they were true to the nation and true to the policy outlined in Calcutta in 1920, then there was nothing in the address to cavil at. They knew how Das had been assailed, how many detractors he had, not merely among the Europeans but amongst his own countrymen and even in his own camp. He might have sat on the fence. He was impatient for swaraj, but he understood their limitations. He could not hurl defiance at the British throne. He admitted his incapacity and that of his countrymen. They have got to evolve not merely a capacity for dying or killing, but the courage required even to live amidst storms and strifes. How then were they to attain freedom? Surely not by killing nor by dying, but by means of Hindu-Muslim unity, the removal of untouchability and by the spinning wheel.

Gandhi prophesied that that day was drawing near and not now far off, when nobody would call him an idiot. Let him have the spinning wheel and he would spin swaraj for India.

In May and June he visited the Bengal villages and found it a satisfying sight. "I was unprepared for the discovery I seem to have made of the spread of khaddar in Bengal." Comilla set up a new standard of public address: "Two per cent wear khadi; six per cent wear mill khadi, twenty per cent half khadi, two per cent spin regularly" and so it went on and Gandhi was delighted with this marshalling of facts. At Chandpur the address was remarkable for a frank expression of its limitations and the major part of it was devoted to a catalogue of local activities. "A remarkable address" deserved an appreciation in *Young India*. The public addresses were in plenty, and he received them while spinning and replied them with his hands all the while engaged at the wheel: "I wanted to give you a demonstration in spinning, an object-lesson, and ask you to spin through the spinning wheel the destiny of India. Today you see only a thread coming out as I turn the wheel and draw the sliver. But it is my certain conviction that with every thread that I draw, I am spinning the destiny of India. The conviction is growing upon me that without the spinning wheel there is no salvation for this country of ours and I ask you as, I am turning the wheel, to set apart half an hour each day from your talking, writing or playing and devote it to spinning."

The public meetings were attended by thousands. The caskets were, in most cases, of delicately artistic indigenous workmanship, and not very costly. With the exception of the one at Dacca, every address contained facts and figures, as accurately as possible, and whilst a majority were in Bengali, at least four were in Sanskrit and three in Hindi.

In many places he walked through bush, briar, mud and water. He tramped, toured in boats and waded through streams to see things with his own eyes. In a village near Dighirpur, he saw thirty boys spinning at their wheels in the courtyard of a school. He surveyed them and said, addressing the teacher: "I am shocked at these wheels. No wonder if we fail in our attempt to popularize charkha. I am glad I have come here. Otherwise, I should have blamed the village in case of failure. Now, I see that the fault is ours. Look at the rickety wheels and the thick spindles. Look at

the horrid sound they make. How can the boys sing whilst spinning, if the wheel does not sing in harmony with their music?" He was provoked to write on "The Drawbacks" on May 28:

"The more I see the Bengal life the more do I realize its immense possibilities in many directions. . . Both men and women of Bengal have a special talent for spinning. I have watched both working at Chandpur, Chittagong, Mahajanhat, Noakhali, Comilla, Dacca and Mymensingh. I have found their work to be on the whole superior to any I have noticed in India. They were not professional spinners, they were not even habitual spinners, for most had come to please or to honour me, if not to humour me. And yet their work was not to be despised. But for want of technical skill this talent and this sacrifice are running to waste. The majority of the spinning wheels I saw were indifferent machines. They were either not working properly or they were so made as to make their working heavy and give not the maximum but the minimum of revolutions of the spindle. Their yield could, therefore, be very poor. I worked at one such wheel for fully thirty minutes. My average output is 130 yards per half hour. On this Bengal wheel it was only 30 yards. With a proper charkha it is possible to treble the output. It is no small gain to the nation or the individual to treble his earning in any given hour. Bengal has a very good and very cheap wheel. Khadi Pratisthan has an excellent wheel that works well and sells at two rupees and eight annas. I have not known a cheaper machine in all India of the same type. I wish that Bengal will adopt Pratisthan model. It is also necessary for an expert to travel to all the places where wheels are working and put the wheels in order and destroy where repair is impossible. The expert may also demonstrate the superiority of the wheel he may recommend. All this work can only be done by men who know and who will give the whole of their time and attention to khaddar work to the exclusion of every thing else. Such organization is the Khadi Pratisthan, and such a specialist is Satish Dasgupta who has given up everything for the sake of the wheel."

The students everywhere were fortunate in drawing Gandhi into intimate talks. The Chittagong students heard from him how essential was spinning for Indian students as naval training was for every English boy, and swimming and boating for every East Bengal boy. The Comilla students had a definition of the national

education from him: "That education is national which educates in you a sense of fellow-feeling for all your countrymen and which teaches you to melt at the woes of your countrymen. And nothing is so universally useful as the spinning wheel."

At Dacca he was provoked, when a student said that spinning wheel was a waste of energy and time, and another, that his advice took no count of the principle of division of labour. "Do I ask you to do spinning for the whole day?" he asked. "Do I ask you to take it up as a substantive occupation? Where, then, is the breach of the principle of division of labour? Do you have a division of labour in eating and drinking? Just as everyone of us must eat and drink and clothe himself, even so, everyone of us must spin himself. And it is a waste, you say? Fellow-feeling for your countrymen, you say, you have in an abundant measure? And what is that fellow-feeling, without the milk of human kindness? Do you feel anything like the love that a cow feels for her calf or a mother for her baby? The cow's udders and the mother's breast overflow with milk at the sight of their young ones. Do your hearts overflow with love at the sight of your famished countrymen? By spinning, my friends, you demonstrate your love for them. You spin and you make them shake off their idleness. A friend goes and beautifully sings before a crowd and affects their hearts. Is it a waste of effort? It would be, of course, if he vainly howls 'Bande Mataram' before them. But spinning means more. It has purpose and it means added production. The purpose is that it serves as a bond with the masses. And the mechanical effort has something as its result, whilst there is absolutely nothing like it which all alike can do without much effort and skill, nothing which can be done by millions, by the best of us as by the mediocre. And the students should all do it particularly because they are the salt of the earth. Their life is yet to begin, they can imbibe new ideas as no one else can; and they have years of service before them. You will perhaps think of England with her elaborate machinery. But she lives on the exploitation of other nations. It is an economic drain which is even more disastrous than the home charges and other drains that Dadabhai Naoroji opened our eyes to. Even he could not see this insidious drain, but I being his disciple working along his lines have discovered this subtle drain and say, that economic drain involved in our being made a nation of idlers, is the most ruinous of all."

Most of his speeches were delivered in Hindi but at some public meetings he spoke in English out of consideration for the lamentable "infatuation of the Bengali" for English. "Understand that slavery of India is coarser than the coarsest khaddar, understand that the pauperism of India is infinitely coarser than the coarsest Chittagong khaddar," he said at Chittagong winding up his fervent appeal. In reply to an address at Dacca he said: "I prize all this; but I prize more the unwritten language of the heart and I want you to find a corner in your heart for my message."

Throughout his tour he referred to the absence of the Ali brothers. At Mymensingh he could hardly contain himself when a Muslim chairman referred to the absence of the Ali brothers in his address. There was a tremor in his tone when Gandhi said: "I am feeling forlorn without either of the Ali brothers. For with them I would have felt absolutely safe, through them I would have easily reached the Muslim heart." And in the same speech, which was devoted to the Hindu-Muslim question, he referred with indignation to the Hindus and Muslims fighting amongst themselves—fighting not even for loaves and fishes, but for stones, fighting like the proverbial dog, not for the bone but for the shadow, and he reiterated his own remedy of perfect surrender—"surrender not of essential and vital things, but of unessential things". The Hindu and the Muslim must each add a common article to his creed, namely, that he can never live without the other.

In Bogra, Gandhi was delighted to see a seven-year-old Muslim girl pulling away yarn at the rate of 500 yards or more an hour. He stood before her but she would not look up. He pulled her ear and asked, "Do you know Mahatma Gandhi?" There were among the Muslim spinners, some women as old as eighty and some who had lost their eyesight doing the constructive work without knowing who Mahatma Gandhi was. One of them proudly said that the spinning wheel was bringing her eight rupees a month sitting at home.

Gandhi influenced Bengal greatly and under the new franchise it stood first in Congress membership. From the humblest peasant to the highest intellectual the message of charkha had appealed. Dr. P. C. Ray divided his love between science and khaddar. Scientists like Haripada Banerji and Satish Dasgupta organized khadi work and institutions like Khadi Pratisthan came into being.

Prafulla Chandra Ghosh, a professor of chemistry, took to village work. Gandhi won the hearts of every section of the society.

"No purdah before your brother," he gently said to a Muslim woman who immediately removed her veil. At Madaripur, in the women's meeting, where two hundred charkhas were humming, Suren Babu held the light to his wife who read the address; when Gandhi saw that the lantern was not near enough he snatched it and held it himself. His speech was devoted to the fallen women, some of whom were spinning in a corner of the meeting. Addressing the volunteers he said: "Take up the work of protecting these fallen sisters. Form a women's volunteers league for the reclamation of fallen women and work through them. You have said in your address that Madaripur has been marked out by Government as the chief among the revolutionary centres. Well nothing short of a revolution is needed amongst the women of India to fight this evil and may Madaripur lay the foundation of that revolution." In Noakhali, old prostitutes were not only spinning but were entirely supporting themselves thereby. And some of them, though they had not given up their calling, had taken to charkha.

At Chittagong the cloth merchants found Gandhi out and at a special function presented an address, in reply to which he said: "I am sure that India was lost through the merchants and I am equally sure that we shall also recover it through them. When we have the full and hearty co-operation of our merchants, swaraj will automatically come to us." To the zamindars who met him at Mahajanhat and Mymensingh he said: "If you have your own dhobi, scavenger, why don't you have your own weaver? And for fine, beautiful yarn, you can get the services of the finest spinners in your parts."

In this tour, his visit to Santiniketan had an added significance. For, as Gandhi said, it was a pilgrimage to the paternal roof where all the love of Borodada, the elder brother of Rabindranath, was awaiting him. He had, of course, long talks with the poet who was anxious to understand things first hand, as he had been long out of India and he proposed to go abroad very soon. The meeting with Borodada was touching. Even as Gandhi sat at the feet of Dadabhai, some thirty-five years ago, he sat down at the feet of Borodada. "Whatever I may be to others, I must descend from my heights here at least and shed my mahatmaship," he said to Borodada who

insisted on Gandhi's sitting on the chair. Three days he listened to Borodada who opened his heart to him: "Even if there is discomfiture all around, and fire and sword dealing destruction everywhere, I am sure that you will stand unscathed and uninjured like that fabled bird Phoenix rising over again from its own ashes. Buddha lived 2,500 years ago and though Buddhism was swept out of the land later, even today the ahimsa that we have inherent in us from generation to generation, is Buddha's legacy. Work on in faith."

"You have taken away my gloom," remarked Borodada, "and I hope that the memory of these days may pull me safe through the dreary journey, through the desert that may still be before me. All those that oppose you will disappear like the bubbles of time. Truth will conquer."

## *Long Live Deshbandhu*

1925

AT THE request of Das, Gandhi consented to have five days' rest at Darjeeling. On June 4, 1925 Deshbandhu's house became a centre of attraction and charkhas began to hum on the hill-station. All the women in the house were spinning and they infected the visitors who came to see Gandhi. Some took their first lessons and the main conversation always turned round the charkha.

The photographers and autograph-hunters were there in plenty and Gandhi found an efficient way to deal with them. He charged his price: "My price is moderate enough, only half an hour's spinning every day for the country and a promise to wear khaddar." At the mere mention of it some drew back, whilst some stopped to pause and think, and some agreed. A young girl went away with her autograph book, came the next day and vowed that she would fulfil the condition. "Thank you," he said, "here is my autograph." He wrote in her book: "Never make a promise in haste. Having once made a promise, fulfil it even at the cost of your life."

Meetings were held as a matter of course and fashionable folk attended in khaddar clothes. The most important function was a meeting with some missionary people. About a hundred of them welcomed Gandhi as the champion of the outcaste and the downtrodden, as a great servant of India, and a great servant of suffering humanity. The theme of discourse, "How to serve Christ better", touched the deepest chords of Gandhi's heart and he spoke from the very depths.

He explained at the very outset the nature of his own mission. Whether politics or religion, it was pre-eminently a mission of self-purification: "For me, politics bereft of religion is absolute dirt, ever to be shunned. Politics concerns nations; that which concerns the welfare of nations must be one of the concerns of a man who is religiously inclined, in other words a seeker after God and Truth.

For me God and Truth are convertible terms and if any one told me that God was a God of untruth or a God of torture I would decline to worship him. In politics also we have to establish the Kingdom of Heaven."

Having cleared the meaning of his mission he came to the main subject. Recalling his speech before a Christian Mission in Madras in 1916, he gave frank and free expression about the proselytizing activity of all missionary religions.

"Proselytizing has done some good," he said, "but it has been out-weighed by the evil it has left behind. Whether you profess one religion or another is of no consequence whatsoever. What God will say, and want us to say, is not what we profess with our lips but what we believe in our hearts; there is no shadow of doubt that there are thousands and thousands of men and women in the world who do not know the Bible or the name of Jesus or of his amazing sacrifice, but who are far more god-fearing than many a Christian who knows the Bible, offers his prayers regularly and believes that he follows all the Ten Commandments. Religion is made of sterner stuff, and it is impossible for us frail and weak human beings to understand what people mean when they say that they would be better if they professed something else from what they did." And he recalled his conversation with a South African chaplain who, after considerable questioning and cross-questioning, had told him that he would not thenceforth want to convert him: "It is not he who says 'Lord, Lord,' I told him, who enters the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth His will. I reminded him that I am conscious of my weaknesses, and try to fight them—not in my own strength but in the strength of God. Is that enough, or do you wish me to repeat parrot-like that Jesus had cleansed me from all sin? He stopped me and said, 'I understand what you mean.' So I say that instead of wanting to find out how many heads you count as Christian, work away like Sir Gibbie, silently among the people and let your work be the silent testimony of your worth. What do you want to convert them for? If your contact with them ennobles them, makes them forget untruth, all evil, and brings them a ray of light, is that not enough? Or in case you have taken charge of an orphan, if you feed him and clothe him, is that not enough? Is that not its own reward? Must you have a mechanical confession from him that he is a Christian? We see today a rivalry, a war

going on among different religions as to the number of adherents each can boast. I feel deeply humiliated and feel that in every one of the feats we claim to have performed in converting people to our faith we are denying our God and being untrue to ourselves."

He paid a glowing tribute to the missionaries who had worked in the field of Indian language literatures, opening out to Indians their hidden treasures, and congratulated the heads of the Missionary Language School of Darjeeling as whose guest he spoke. But that was hardly enough if they wanted to serve Christ better. They must pick up the poorest portion of humanity and identify themselves with them, never seeking protection from temporal power, but ever glorying in the strength of God, "penetrating the masses with your lives in the palms of your hands".

As far as the Himalayas, Gandhi found pioneers in constructive programme, working away in a selfless manner. One of them was a Bihari from Chapra, who waylaid Gandhi at Siliguri and got a promise from him to halt again for a while on his way back. Another was an U. P. man from Ballia, keeping a small shop at Tindharia. He was clad in khaddar and as he placed ten rupees in Gandhi's hands, he explained that he was a reader of *Navajivan*. He met Gandhi once more on the same day, now with his wife, to see him off at the station, and gave him twenty rupees. When asked, he said: "I get two copies of *Navajivan*, one for my file and another to circulate among the Hindi-knowing hill people." As the train started, he asked Mahadev where he could send from time to time contributions for khaddar work.

From Darjeeling Gandhi proceeded to places in Bengal which could not be included in the first tour—Jalpaiguri in the extreme north and Barisal and Khulna in the extreme south. There were addresses at all places. At Jalpaiguri, he got more time to devote to volunteers, most of whom were students. It was one of those intimate, heart-to-heart chats: "You say there is no fun in spinning. But I ask you, is there any fun in reciting the Gayatri? Is there any fun in reciting the Kalma? You do it as it is a duty, as it is a sacrament. India is dying. She is on death-bed. Have you ever watched a dying man? Have you ever felt his feet? You find that they are cold and benumbed, though you still feel some warmth on the head and comfort yourselves that the life is not yet gone out of him. But it is ebbing away. Even so the masses of India—

the feet of the Mother—are cold and palsied. If you want to save India, do it by doing the little that I ask for. I warn you. Take up the wheel betimes, or perish."

There were not a few occasions when Gandhi had to reply to youthful outbursts. Once a Muslim came with a long catalogue of grievances. First was untouchability as observed against the Muslims by the Hindus; second, differences about cow slaughter; third, insufficient representation; fourth, books and pamphlets against Islam; fifth, newspaper reports about abductions and such other alleged crimes by Muslims; sixth, exclusions from services; seventh, exactions by *mahajans*; eighth, *abvabs* by zamindars for Kalipuja. Gandhi told him that some of the grievances were purely local, some were against particular individuals and some reciprocal, the real grievance was the first. He immediately agreed that that was the principal grievance and others arose out of them. "They do not even sell sweetmeats to us," he said. "Yes I see it," Gandhi said. "That's a genuine grievance; but you should not, as you did in the beginning, magnify everything into a grievance suffered by Musalmans as a community. I tell the Hindus that if they want to protect Hinduism by an elaborate law of pollution, then it had better perish. You cannot convert India into a *Jazirat-ul-Arab*. Hindus have in the past absorbed all sorts of nationalities. I am sure we shall have to revise our code of pollution and remove the unnecessary barriers that strangle Hinduism rather than strengthen it. We were never exclusive, we were inclusive. Its beauty is that it has never been a missionary religion like Islam or Christianity, ever counting heads. It has carried on absorption unconsciously, following a sort of natural accretion. 'Why,' I ask my Hindu friends, 'why do we at this time of the day prevent sweetmeat sellers from selling sweets to Musalmans when we have no objection to getting chocolates from a European confectioner?' "

At another place came an ardent youth saying, "You must do away with untouchability lock, stock and barrel." "What do you mean?" Gandhi asked. He answered back, "the restrictions about inter-dining also must go." "You want people to dine out of the same plate?" "No". "Then you seem to agree with me." "But, sir, don't you agree that people of different castes and creeds may dine sitting in the same room or same row?" "They may. I do not call that inter-dining." "Well, sir, why did you not force your way into

the temple at Cape Comorin when they did not admit you? It was an insult you should not have put up with", said the young man flitting to another topic. "You are the light of the world and who were they to exclude you?" "Yes," said Gandhi laughing, "either I was not the light of the world and they were justified in keeping me out; or I am the light of the world and I should not have forced my way into it." "Do you think, sir, Hindu-Muslim unity is possible when Maulana Mahomed Ali says an adulterous Musalman is superior to Mahatma Gandhi?" "Pardon me, he never said so. He said, he is superior in one respect, in his creed. His was only a picturesque way of putting it. And why can't you understand such a simple thing? Supposing I have a Kohinoor diamond and some one says Gandhi is better than a zamindar in possessing the diamond Kohinoor, can't he say so? To every one his religion is the best in the world, as to every chaste man his wife should be the most beautiful woman in the world. And in the same way Mahomed Ali said, any Musalman was better than I in having a better creed." "Then really he did not make the statement that I have read him to make." "You did not read it carefully. He said nothing of the kind. He even said I was better as a man than, for instance, his mother or his preceptor, both of whom he adores. It is a perfect statement that he made. But I agree there is another side to the question. A man's creed is good so long as he lives it, and a creed without the example is nothing. But Maulana Mahomed Ali was stating his position as a logician. The distinction he drew was a fatal distinction, but there can be no doubt as to its logical correctness."

Gandhi reached Khulna under the shadow of national calamity. The news of the sudden death of C. R. Das at Darjeeling on June 16 reached him immediately on his arrival. All the functions except a general public meeting were dropped. There in the midst of the speech, just after the first sentence, "Das was one of the greatest of men", Gandhi broke down. He spoke of Das with great feeling and asked: "What shall we do to perpetuate his memory? It is easy to shed tears, but no tears can help us or his nearest dearest. Only if everyone of us, Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and Christians, all who call themselves Indians, pledge ourselves to do the work in which he lived, moved and had his being, shall we have done something. We are believers in God. We should know that the body is ever

perishing. The soul is imperishable. The body that held Deshbandhu Das has perished, but his soul will never perish. Not only the soul, even the name of him who had served and sacrificed so much will remain immortal and every one, young and old, who follows his great example to ever so little an extent will help to perpetuate his loving memory."

Gandhi cancelled the Assam tour and left for Calcutta to participate in the funeral procession of Deshbandhu Das. On June 18 the body of Das was brought from Darjeeling to Calcutta and it was carried in a big procession straight from the Sealdah station to the burning *ghat.* The bier was carried by Gandhi, Maulana Azad and others; all classes, all parties and all communities took part in the spontaneous demonstration of love and honour to the departed leader.

Deshbandhu's death was intensely felt by Motilal Nehru who was recuperating at Chamba in the interior of the Himalayas. When he received the news, for a long time he sat still without a word, bowed down with grief. The one person who had grown to be a dearer comrade to him than any one else had suddenly gone and left him to shoulder the burden alone. In his last letter to Motilal Nehru, Das wrote: "The most critical time in our history is coming. There must be solid work done at the end of the year and the beginning of the next; our resources will be taxed, and here we are both of us ill. God knows what will happen."

On June 17 Gandhi wrote a few lines on the great bereavement: "When the heart feels a deep cut the pen refuses to move. I am too much in centre of grief to be able to send much for the readers of *Young India* across the wire. The five days of communion with the great patriot which I had at Darjeeling, brought us nearer to each other than we were ever before. I realized not only how great Deshbandhu was, but also how good he was. India has lost a jewel. But we must regain it by gaining swaraj."

His first article on the demise of Das appeared on June 20 as a signed leader in *Forward,* an organ of the Swaraj Party. Under "Long Live Deshbandhu", he wrote:

"Calcutta demonstrated yesterday the hold Deshbandhu had on Bengal, nay, India. Calcutta is like Bombay, cosmopolitan. It has people from all the provinces. And all these people were as hearty participators in the procession as the Bengalis. The wires that are

pouring in from every part of India emphasize the fact of his all-India popularity.

"It could not well be otherwise among a people known for their gratefulness. And he deserved it all. His sacrifice was great. His generosity had no bounds. His loving hand was opened out to all. He was reckless in his charities. And only the other day, when I gently remarked that he might have been discriminate, prompt came the reply, 'I do not think I have lost by my indiscriminations.' His board was free to the prince and pauper. His heart went out to everyone in distress. Where is the young man in all Bengal who does not owe a debt of gratitude to Deshbandhu in some shape or other? His unrivalled legal talents were also at the disposal of the poor. I understand that he defended many political prisoners without charging them a pie. He went to the Punjab for the Punjab inquiry and paid his own expenses. He carried a princely household. I had it from him that he spent during that stay in the Punjab Rs. 50,000. This large-heartedness towards all who sought his help made him the undisputed ruler of thousands of young hearts.

"He was as fearless as he was generous. His stormy speeches at Amritsar took my breath away. He wanted immediate deliverance for his country. He would not brook the alteration or removal of an adjective—not because he was unreasonable, but because he loved his country so well. He gave his life for it. He controlled enormous forces. He brought power to his party by his indomitable zeal and perseverance. But this tremendous outpouring of energy cost him his life. It was a willing sacrifice. It was noble.

"Faridpur was his crowning triumph. That utterance of his is a demonstration of his supreme reasonableness and statesmanship. It was a deliberate, unequivocal and for him—as he said to me—final acceptance of non-violence as the only policy and, therefore, political creed for India.

"In constructing with Pandit Motilal Nehru and the disciplined stalwarts from Maharashtra the great and growing Swaraj Party out of nothing, Deshbandhu showed determination, originality, resourcefulness and contempt of consequences, after he had once made up his mind that the thing to be done was right. And today the Swaraj Party is a compact, well-disciplined organization. My differences about the council entry were and are fundamental, but I never doubted the usefulness of council entry for the purpose

of embarrassment and continuously putting the Government in the wrong. No one can deny the greatness of the work done by the party in the councils. And the credit for it must predominantly belong to Deshbandhu. I entered into the pact with him with my eyes open. I have since done my little best to help the party. His death renders it doubly my duty to stand by the Swaraj Party now that the leader is gone. I shall do nothing to impede its progress where I may not be able to help.

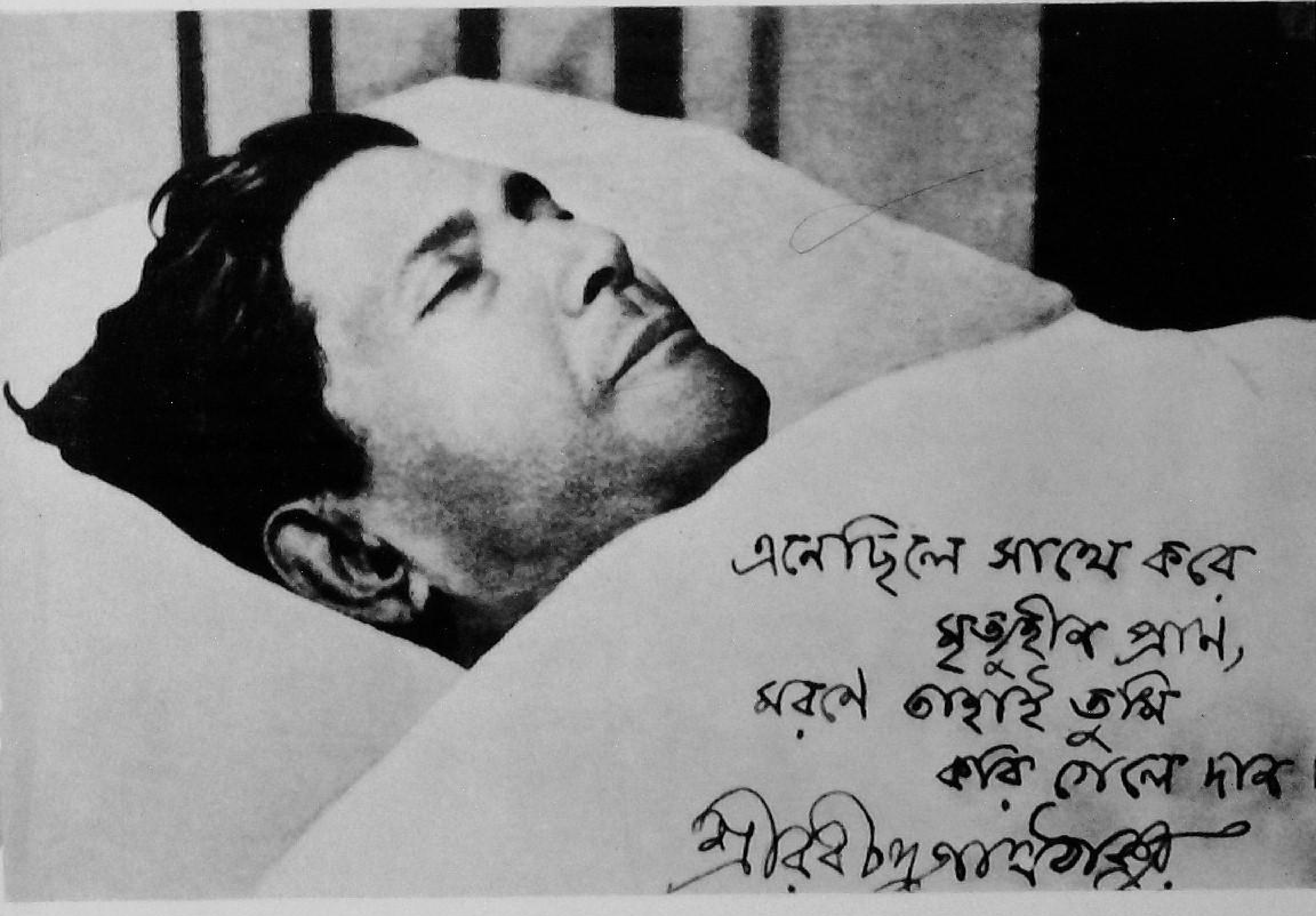
"But I must hark back to the Faridpur speech. The nation will appreciate the courtesy of the Acting Viceroy in sending a message of condolence to Shrimati Basanti Devi. I note with gratefulness the warm tributes paid by the Anglo-Indian press to the memory of the deceased. The Faridpur speech seems to have impressed most Englishmen with its transparent sincerity. I am anxious that this death should not end with a mere display of courtesy. The Faridpur speech had a great purpose behind it. It was a generous response to the Anglo-Indian friends who were anxious for the great patriot to make his position clear and make the first approach. He made it. The cruel hand of death has removed the author of the gesture from our midst. But I would like to assure Englishmen who may be still doubtful about the sincerity of Deshbandhu's motive that throughout my stay in Darjeeling, the one thing that struck me most was his utter sincerity about that utterance. Cannot this glorious death be utilized to heal wounds and forget distrust? I make a simple suggestion. Will the Government in honour of the memory of Chittaranjan Das, who is no longer with us to plead the cause, release the political prisoners who he protested were innocent? I am not now asking for their discharge on the ground of innocence. The Government may have the best proof of guilt. I ask for their discharge as a tribute to the deceased and without prejudice. If the Government truly mean to do anything to placate Indian opinion, there can be no more opportune time and no better inauguration of a favourable atmosphere than the release of these prisoners. I have travelled practically all over Bengal. Public feeling, not all necessarily Swarajist, is very sore on the point. May the fire, that burnt yesterday the perishable part of Deshbandhu Das, also burn the perishable distrust, suspicion and fear. The Government may then call a conference if they will, to consider the means of meeting Indian demand whatever it may be.

"But we will have to do our part, if the Government are to do theirs. We must be able to show that we are no one-man show. In the words of Mr. Winston Churchill, uttered at the time of the war, we must be able to say, 'Business as usual.' The Swaraj Party must be immediately reconstructed. Even the Punjab Hindus and Musalmans appear to have forgotten their quarrels in the face of this bolt from the blue. Can both parties feel strong and sensible enough to close the ranks? Deshbandhu was a believer in and lover of Hindu-Muslim unity. He held the Hindus and Musalmans together under the most trying circumstances. Can the funeral fire purge us of our disunion? Perhaps the prelude to it is a meeting of all the parties on a common platform. Deshbandhu was anxious for it. He could be bitter in speaking of his opponents. But during my stay in Darjeeling I do not remember a harsh word having escaped his lips about a single political opponent. He wanted me to help to bring all the parties together. It is then for us educated Indians to give effect to the visions of Deshbandhu and realize the one ambition of his life by immediately rising a few steps in the ladder of swaraj even if we may not rise to the top just yet. Then may we cry from the bottom of our hearts: 'Deshbandhu is dead. Long live Deshbandhu.'"

"Bengal is like a widow today," exclaimed Gandhi. "I felt forlorn when cruel fate snatched away Lokamanya from us. I have not yet got over this shock, for I am yet wooing his beloved disciples. But Deshbandhu's withdrawal leaves me in a worse plight. For when Lokamanya left us the country was full of hopes. Hindus and Musalmans appeared to be united for ever. We were on the eve of battle. Now?"

To commemorate the memory of the patriot, Gandhi appealed for funds to raise All-Bengal Deshbandhu Das Memorial and in two months he collected about Rs. 10 lakhs to convert Das' mansion into a hospital for women and children. He also put forth all his efforts to strengthen the Swaraj Party in Bengal and helped J. M. Sengupta to don the "triple crown" on June 28, which Das was himself wearing. Mr. Sengupta was elected the Mayor of Calcutta, the president of the Bengal Swaraj Party and also of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee.

In the last talks at Darjeeling, Das had told Gandhi that he expected big things from Lord Birkenhead and at last the pronouncement of the Secretary of State for India appeared on July 10. He



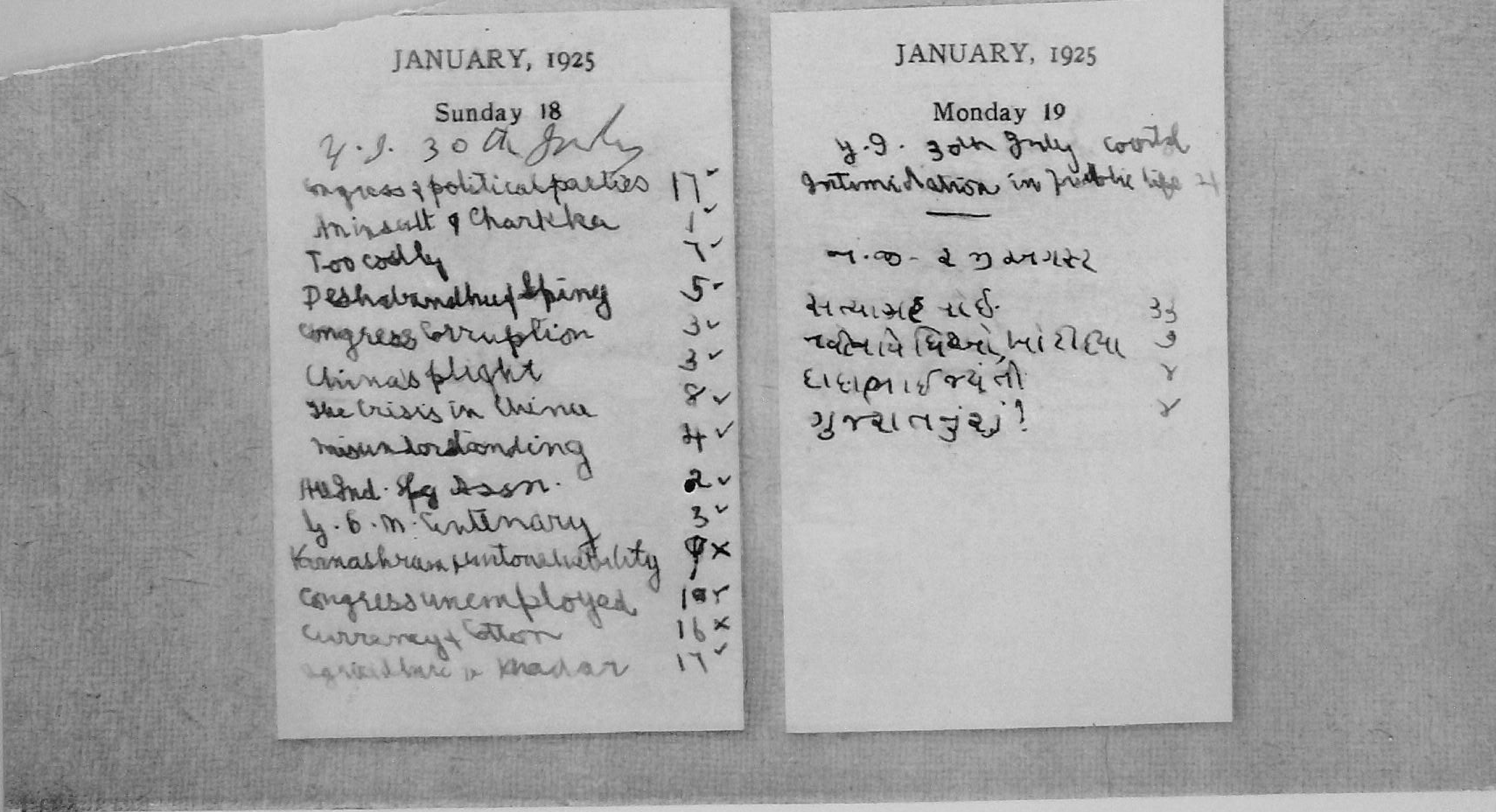

*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi and C. R. Das on their walk in Darjeeling during the first week of June 1925

Death of Das, Darjeeling, June 16, 1925—Inscription by Tagore:
"Ye blessed by immortal life—sacrificed through death."

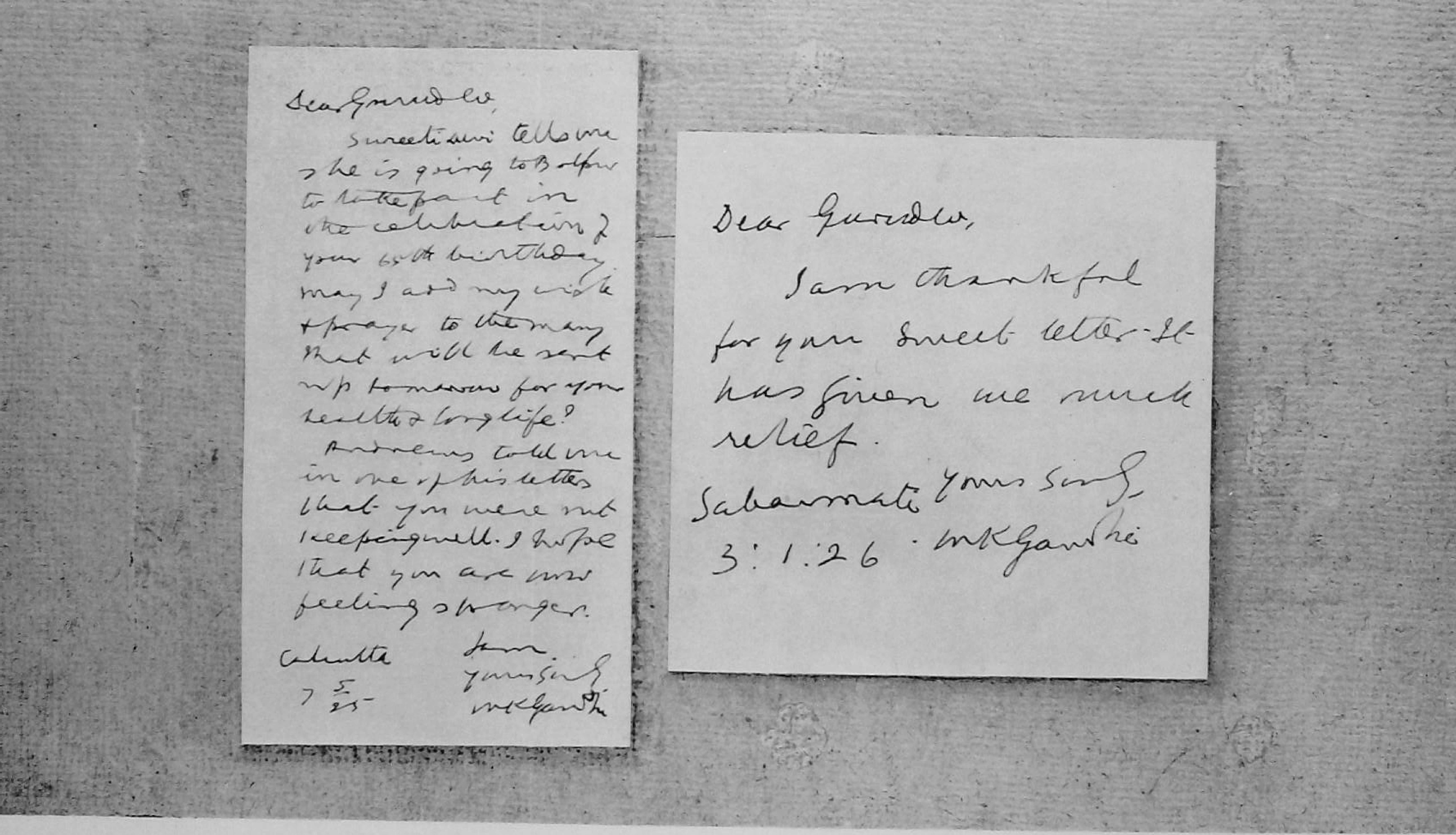
From Sumati Morarjee

Gandhi restoring order during the funeral procession of C. R. Das, Calcutta, June 18, 1925
Gandhi writing Das' obituary at the cremation grounds




Courtesy : Sabarmati Ashram, Ahmedabad

A page from Gandhi's diary noting schedule of articles for *Young India* and *Navjivan*, July 30, 1925



Dear Gurudev,

Sureshdevi tells me she is going to Bolpur to take part in the celebration of your 65th birthday. May I add my wishes & prayer to the many that will be sent up tomorrow for your health & long life?

Andrews told me in one of his letters that you were not keeping well. I hope that you are now feeling stronger.

Calcutta
7/5/25

I am
Yours sincerely
M K Gandhi

Dear Gurudev,

I am thankful for your sweet letter. It has given me much relief.

Sabarmati
3:1:26

Yours sincerely
M K Gandhi

*Courtesy : Viswa-Bharati*

Gandhi's letters to Tagore, dated May 7, 1925 and January 3, 1926

said that no decision had been reached with Lord Reading, and before any changes could be made, the Legislative Assembly must be consulted. Revision of the constitution before the period laid down by the act depended on the creation of certain conditions. The reforms, he continued, had not altogether failed, although Indian leaders had abused and defamed them, and the most highly organized party in India had deliberately set out to destroy them. The constitution would undoubtedly require revision after ten years, when everything would be thrown into the melting-pot, and so on and so forth.

The pronouncement was severely criticized even by the Liberals and Gandhi observed:

"The speech is a severe disappointment not so much for what it does not give as for the utter inactualities for which the Secretary of State for India has made himself responsible . . .

"Lord Birkenhead had before him the minority report of the Muddiman Committee, that is, of Dr. Sapru and Mr. Jinnah, two among the cleverest lawyers we have in India and who have never been guilty of the crime of non-co-operation, and one of whom has been the Law Member of the Viceregal Council. They and their colleagues have been told that they did not know their business. Has then a constitution framed by Motilal Nehru and endorsed by, say, the Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri and Mian Fazli Hussain, any better chance of favourable reception? Is not Lord Birkenhead's offer a trap for the unwary to fall in?"

"The speech is a notice to us to set our own house in order," he said. "I for one am thankful for it." The general council of the Swaraj Party which met on July 16 was attended by Nehru, Jayakar, Patel, Gandhi and others. After prolonged discussion it endorsed all what Das had said in his Faridpur speech and regretted that Birkenhead's pronouncement was calculated "by reason of its tone and language, to make the chances of honourable co-operation difficult, if not impossible."

The outcome of this meeting was that Gandhi placed the whole machinery of the Congress at the disposal of Motilal Nehru:

"During these few days I have been taxing myself what special exclusive contribution I can make to the memory of Deshbandhu and the situation created by Lord Birkenhead's speech and I have come to the conclusion that I should absolve the Swaraj Party from

obligations under the pact of last year. The result of this act is that the Congress need no longer be a predominantly spinning association. I recognize that under the situation created by the speech the authority and the influence of the Swaraj Party need to be increased. I would fail in my duty, if I neglected a single step within my power to increase the strength of the party. This can be done, if the Congress becomes a predominantly political body. Under the pact the Congress activity is restricted to the constructive programme mentioned therein. I do recognize that this restriction should not continue under the altered circumstances that face the country now. Not only do I personally absolve you from the restriction, but I propose to ask the forthcoming meeting of the A.-I.C.C. to do likewise and place the whole machinery of the National Congress at your disposal so as to enable you to bring before that body such political resolutions as you may consider necessary in the interest of the country. In fact, I would have you regard me at your disposal in all such matters in which I can conscientiously serve you and the Swaraj Party."

Gandhi having succeeded in raising money for the All-Bengal Memorial now turned to an All-India Deshbandhu Memorial. On July 23 an appeal under the signatures of Gandhi, Nehru, Tagore, Azad and others appeared in *Young India;*

"We cannot conceive a more fitting memorial than the universal propagation of the spinning wheel and khaddar and, therefore, invite funds for that purpose. We refrain from naming the sum required for this memorial as it can absorb all it can receive."

During his prolonged stay in Bengal Gandhi was able to dispel the fears of those who, never doubting his sincerity, had doubts about his friendliness to opponents and critics. On an invitation from the Rotary Club, Gandhi addressed the Europeans on the economic and spiritual value of the charkha.

The meeting which was held in Grand Hotel, Calcutta, on August 18, was perhaps unique in the history of the Rotary Club. Mr. James, the president, welcomed Gandhi as a social reformer and as one who had throughout his life put service before self and the pivot of whose activities was the spinning wheel. There were no less than a hundred Britishers present, with a sprinkling of Indian guests. It was a "Ladies Day" and a strictly vegetarian luncheon was arranged in honour of the distinguished guest. He particularly

appreciated the "delicate courtesy" extended to him of making their luncheon a Bengali widow's luncheon, and the invitation to speak on a subject as uninteresting as the potato and cabbage spread before the Rotarians.

The claims of the charkha as the competitor of the spinning mills, were as seriously listened to as they were advanced by the speaker. The mills could not possibly reach even a fraction of the millions living in the seven hundred thousand villages spread over the vast area of the country, most of them not even reached by the railway line. A tenth of the population lived on one meal a day consisting of dry bread and a pinch of dirty salt, and did not even according to the liberal computation of Lord Curzon get on an average more than three rupees a month per head. Does not a sum of five or six rupees per month added to this paltry income mean a fortune to them? Well then the spinning wheel means that to the millions. It was the only thing that could be made universal, only thing which did not require any special skill to learn and which was indeed a marvel of cheapness. The speaker frankly could not think of a device more eminently fitted to solve the problem of the economic distress, flood and famine in India.

If the mills made superfluous additions to the treasures of the already rich, the spinning wheel was certainly spiritually superior to it inasmuch as it filled the pockets not of those who were already rich but of the starving and the needy millions. "I read with deep interest," said Gandhi, "Drummond's book on *The Natural Law in the Spiritual World* long ago, and I am sure that if I had that writer's facile pen, I would demonstrate even better that there is a spiritual law in the natural world." He had read books by sane men seriously advocating the electrocution to end the race of the starving, the diseased and the infirm. It may be an eminently economical remedy, but it was not a human or a spiritual remedy. In the spinning wheel he was offering to his people a spiritual remedy, a remedy with which they had been familiar for ages, a remedy which if seriously tried would save them from the hideous consequences that town and factory life involved. And need he say anything as to the spiritual reaction on the mind, of the simple instrument? So many who had tried it bore witness to the fact that it brought peace to the distracted and troubled mind, and the genius of Goethe had woven that effect into song for ages, when he represented Margaret

spinning away at the wheel and through its inspiration spinning out of her lips a song as perfect as the yarn from the wheel. He was not at all an enemy of inventions, said Gandhi, clinching the argument, but as matter misplaced was dirt, all inventions misplaced were abominations, to be shunned if they did not add to human dignity and peace.

He had studiously avoided the political aspect of the spinning wheel throughout his discourse, but Dr. Sarbadhikari, a Rotarian, who spoke last, compelled him to do so. "If the spinning wheel," he asked, "had played such a large part in Hindu ritual and was a living thing in the Bengali home, how had it fallen into disuse? Is it not the cost of the product of the wheel which has driven it out?" "That," said Gandhi, "involved the spiritual aspect too." If he had the authority of Queen Elizabeth, he would deal with the question just as she had done. She made it criminal for her people to use Holland lace, imported workmen from abroad to teach her people how to make lace, and interdicted the use of lace until then. He was not an out-and-out free trader and he would, if he could, effectively stop all import of foreign cloth by heavy import duties. "And you have asked," said he, warming up, "how the industry had died. Well, it is a painful answer, but I must give it. It was made to die." He could have narrated the whole blood-curdling tale which tarnished the record of the East India Company, but he refrained. "It would make the blood of every honest man and woman boil to turn over the pages written not by Indians but by the servants of the company. When I tell you that people had to cut off their thumbs in order to escape the terrorism set forth, you would understand the position. The charkha was not living in every home as Dr. Sarbadhikari had said, it had been killed, and it was now being revived. Every country had to organize its industries, and it did not matter if they had to pay more for their products in the beginning."

"Service before self" is the motto of the club, and the speaker, reminding them of it, said: "You are trustees of the welfare of the people of India. You will have to put service before self and teach them to feel that they should not have Manchester calico or mill-made cloth when they can make cloth in their own homes." He instanced the competition between a Dutch Steam Navigation Company and a British Company, where the former went to the length of selling tickets almost free for deck passengers which once

used to cost Rs. 91, and said, "Healthy industry cannot stand that competition. You will educate the world opinion against such immoral competition. I want fair competition, and no favour."

"Is it possible to love one's country and not to hate those who rule over it, whose domination we do not want and dislike from the bottom of our hearts?" was the question with which the younger generation was faced, observed Gandhi speaking at a meeting in Overtoun Hall, Calcutta. The answer given by many was that it was impossible. As a student of the question for thirty years, the speaker was there to declare his conviction that nationalism was perfectly consistent with the love of those whose rule we did not like. The disabilities with which he had been face to face all these years in South Africa and India were enough to make one hate his fellow beings, if he did not preserve his sanity. Correctly or incorrectly one feels he is subjected to the grossest tyrannies, for no reason but that he is not of the same colour as the rulers. How is he then to love those rulers, was the question. Love being a positive force may be considered out of the question—how could he help hating the tyrant? Illustrations were taken from wars and administration of law in civilized societies to prove that hatred seemed to be the essence of nationalism. Nevertheless it was the grossest of delusions. "So long as a large body of men and women, retain that attitude, the progress of this country, the progress of the world is retarded. The world is weary of hate. We see the fatigue overcoming the western nations. We see that this song of hate has not benefited humanity. Let it be the privilege of India to turn a new leaf and set a lesson to the world. Is it necessary that three hundred millions of people should hate one hundred thousand Englishmen? That is the concrete form to which this evening's subject can be reduced. In my opinion it is derogatory to the dignity of mankind, it is derogatory to the dignity of India to entertain for a single moment hatred towards Englishmen." But it were wellnigh impossible for masses of humanity to eradicate hatred. Transfer then your hatred, said the speaker, from the evil-doer to the evil itself. "Hate the evil but not the evil-doer," was the maxim he would offer them.

And in a few sentences he declared his creed: "No one in India, perhaps, can claim better than myself to have spoken as fiercely of the English rulers and the corrupt nature of the system under which we are governed. My freedom from hatred—I would even

go so far as to claim for myself individually, my love—of those who consider themselves to be my enemies does not make me blind to their faults. That is no love which is extended simply because of the possession of some virtues fancied or real in the beloved. If I am true to myself, if I am true to mankind, if I am true to humanity, I must understand all the faults that human flesh is heir to. I must understand the weaknesses of my opponents, their vices, and yet in spite of them, not hate but love them. I have not hesitated to call the system of government under which we are labouring 'satanic', and I withdraw naught out of it. But I know that I shall not deal with it, if I begin to devise means of punishing the evil-doer. My business is to love them and by patient and gentle handling to convert them. Non-co-operation is not a hymn of hate. I know that many who call themselves satyagrahis or non-co-operators do not deserve to bear that name. They have done violence to their own creed. Real non-co-operation is non-co-operation with evil and not with the evil-doer." That was, however, not the place to go into the intricacy of the doctrine. It was a law that was applied in all well-organized families and he appealed to them to extend that law in political field. A father or a son did neither seek to punish nor encourage a son or father inclined to do evil, but tries to correct him. Of course there were fathers and sons who under a false sense of love doted on the erring sons or fathers. But he was talking of the "love that discriminates, love that was intelligent, love which was not blind to a single fault—the love of the reformer." The moment we realized the secret, evil would go out of sight.

And he instanced cases in which the reformer's love could play and had played an effective part. It could be applied as between members of the same community, not to speak of different races. There were some Hindus who considered untouchability as part and parcel of Hinduism, and quoted scriptures as authority. Were the more enlightened Hindus to hate or cut off the heads of those unenlightened ones? No. The secret was persistent non-violent conduct—or, better still, suffering in one's own person. Vaikom was an instance in point. It was the young men of Vaikom that had made untouchability in Travancore lose its foothold.

Summing up, Gandhi said: "Suffering is the secret. Hatred is not essential for nationalism. Race hatred will kill the real national spirit. Let us understand what nationalism is. We want freedom for

our country, but not at the expense or exploitation of others, not so as to degrade other countries. For my own part I do not want the freedom of India if it means extinction of England or the disappearance of Englishmen. I want the freedom of my country so that other countries may learn something from my free country, so that the resources of my country might be utilized for the benefit of mankind. Just as the cult of patriotism teaches us today that the individual has to die for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province, and the province for the country, even so a country has to be free in order that it may die, if necessary, for the benefit of the world. My love, therefore, of nationalism is that my country may become free, that if need be the whole of the country die, so that the human races may live. There is no room for race hatred there. Let that be our nationalism."

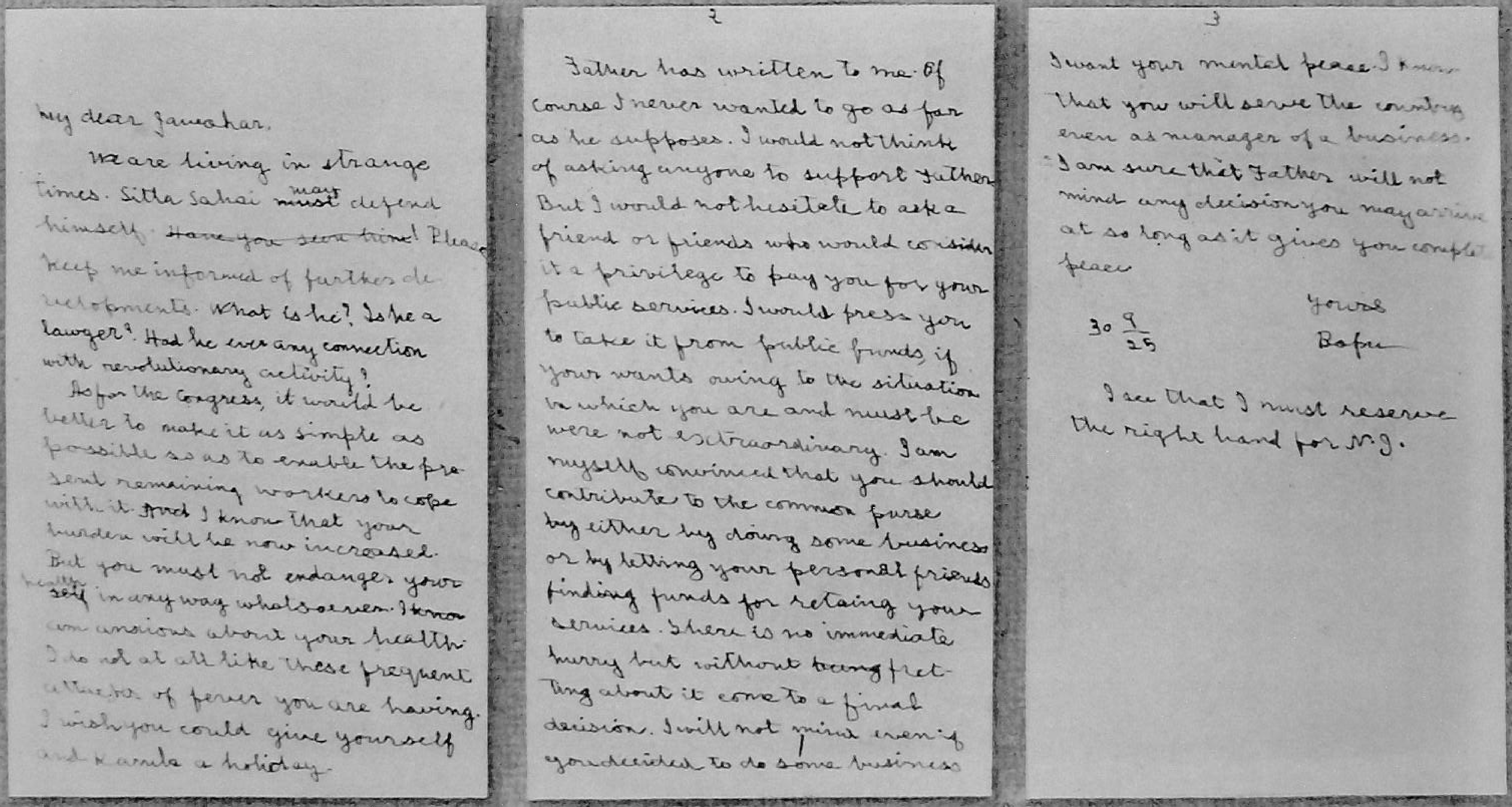
A question from Mr. Chapman, the librarian of the Imperial Library, drew a telling reply from Gandhi. "Was not the insistence on political freedom and political equality on the part of Indians conducive to race hatred, when Indians were not capable of ruling themselves?" Gandhi replied: "If you have drawn the deduction from what I said that we should tolerate your rule so long as we are not capable of managing our affairs you are mistaken. We can develop that capacity only by resistance to the system. And may I say that the questioner unconsciously betrayed his own race prejudice when he referred to Indians as incapable of ruling themselves. Underlying that prejudice is the idea of superiority and the conceit that the Englishmen are born to manage the affairs of the world. That is an idea to fight which my whole life has been dedicated. Unless the Englishmen are dislodged from that position, there is no peace in India, nor any peace for the weaker races of the earth. It is the absolute right of India to misgovern herself. My heart rebels against any foreigner imposing on my country the peace which is here called Pax Britannica."

Gandhi made himself available to all who wanted a clarification. His only contact so far with the Anglo-Indians was on the railways because they had somehow or other fought shy of public meetings. But at last even they invited him to speak to them in Calcutta. He asked them to cast their lot with the masses and abandon the aping habits. He said that their interests, as those of all minorities, would under his scheme, be protected by a just, voluntary pact—

a pact not supported by a legislation which presupposes a third party, but absolutely voluntary like the pact between himself and the Swarajists, like the pact he offered to Musalmans at Delhi. Expanding on the subject, Gandhi observed:

"I have talked to you about your duty. You will naturally like to know my duty. Well, if I became the Viceroy of India, which I think is never coming to pass, I would give you and the other minorities the choice and ask you to take what you want. I would call all the leaders of the parties and tell them my proposal. Then I would call such of you as are numerically weakest to come first and to ask what you want. In services I would insist on a decent examination test, that is, I would only ask a candidate 'How much of man or woman you are? Have you got ability to rise to the occasion?' Provided he or she passes these tests, I would select first one who belongs to the least numerical section. Thus I would give preference to all minorities along just lines, consistent with the welfare of India. I would not flatter you or pamper you but only give you your due."

By his prolonged stay Gandhi not only consoled widowed Bengal but conquered her heart.


My dear Jawahar,

We are living in strange times. Sitla Sahai may defend himself. ~~Have you seen him~~! Please keep me informed of further developments. What is he? Is he a lawyer? Had he ever any connection with revolutionary activity?

As for the Congress, it would be better to make it as simple as possible so as to enable the present remaining workers to cope with it. And I know that your burden will be now increased. But you must not endanger your health in any way whatsoever. I am anxious about your health. I do not at all like these frequent attacks of fever you are having. I wish you could give yourself and Kamla a holiday.

2

Father has written to me. Of course I never wanted to go as far as he supposes. I would not think of asking anyone to support Father. But I would not hesitate to ask a friend or friends who would consider it a privilege to pay you for your public services. I would press you to take it from public funds, if your wants owing to the situation in which you are and must be were not extraordinary. I am myself convinced that you should contribute to the common purse by either by doing some business or by letting your personal friends finding funds for retaining your services. There is no immediate hurry but without being fretting about it come to a final decision. I will not mind even if you decided to do some business

3

I want your mental peace. I know that you will serve the country even as manager of a business. I am sure that Father will not mind any decision you may arrive at so long as it gives you complete peace.

30 9/25

Yours
Bapu

I see that I must reserve the right hand for N.J.

*Courtesy : Jawaharlal Nehru*

An intimate letter by Gandhi to Jawaharlal Nehru, written with the left-hand, September 30, 1925

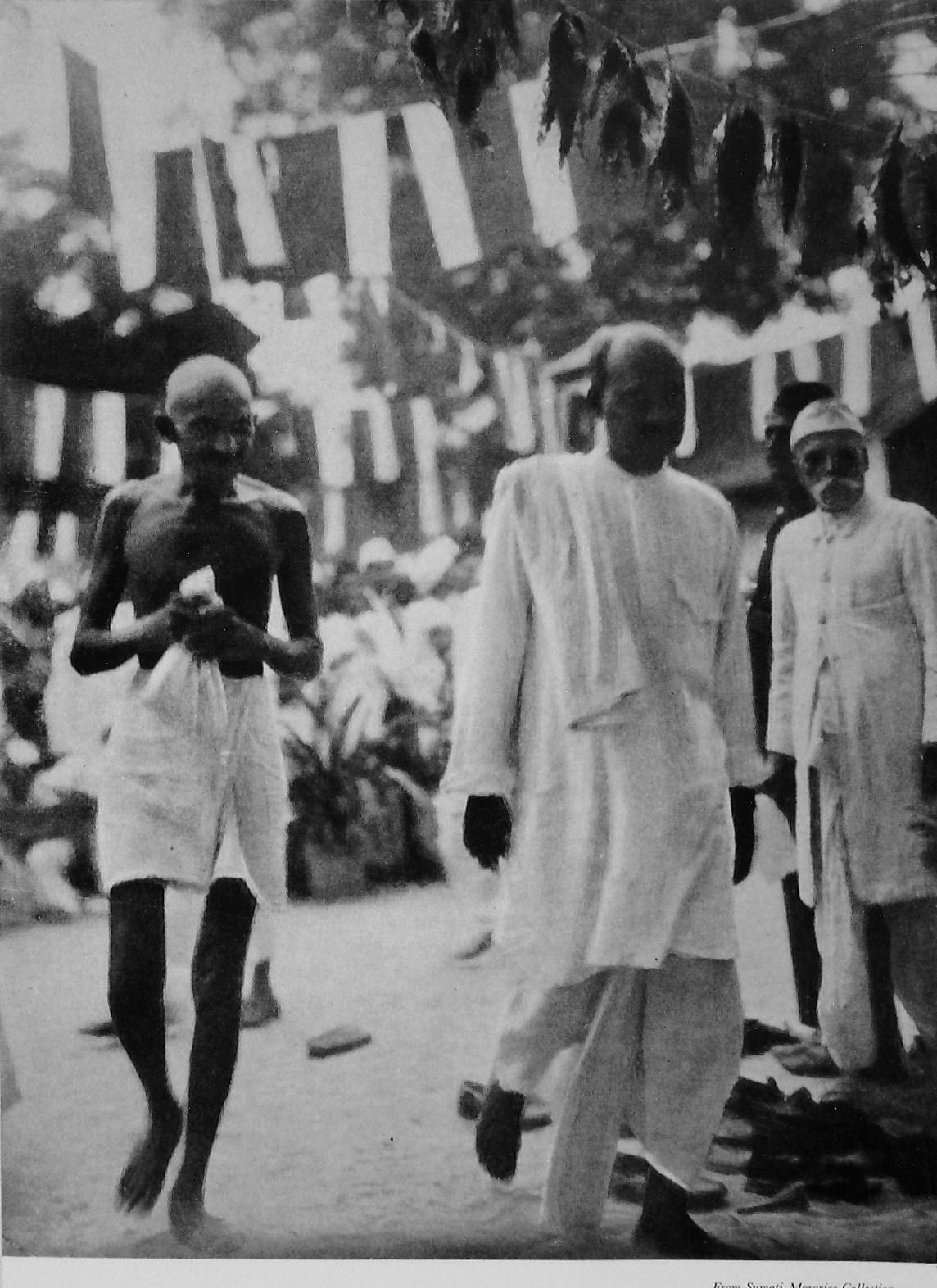
*Courtesy : R. M. Rava*

Gandhi on the Gujarat Vidyapith grounds, December 1925

Gandhi, as Chancellor, delivering the convocation address to Vidyapith students, December 5, 1925

*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi unveiling the portrait of Acharya Gidwani, Principal of the Gujarat Vidyapith, December 5, 1925



*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Vallabhbhai Patel, President of Ahmedabad Municipality, leading Gandhi to the pandal where he was given a civic address, Ahmedabad, 1925

## *March With Time*

1925

GANDHI fixed the first meeting of the A.-I.C.C. for September. Protests from no-changers started pouring in: "You made a pact with the Swarajists last year. Did they faithfully work it out as promised at Belgaum? You know most of the no-changers did not like the pact but accepted it against their wishes for you. Now again you have thrown them overboard by your promise to the Swarajists without even their consultation. Is the council programme the only political programme? The Swarajists do not want your spinning association. Why not start it outside the Congress and surrender completely to the Swarajists?"

Explaining his position in *Young India* dated August 20, 1925 Gandhi wrote:

"The writers forget that I do not claim to lead or have any party, if only for the reason that I seem to be constantly changing and shifting my ground. To me I seem to be constantly growing. I must respond to varying conditions, and yet remain changeless within. I have no desire to drag anybody. My appeal is continuously to the head and heart combined. At the forthcoming meeting I expect an open and unfettered discussion wherein my opinion should be counted as only one among the many that would be then expressed. I know that this would appear to many to be utterly nonsensical. But if I persist long enough in expressing my opinion freely, those who feel that they are being dragged will resist me. After all, what have I done save that I have gauged the mind of educated India? I do not wish violently to wrest the Congress from educated India. The latter must grow to the new thought, if such it is. It is not for those who have ceased to believe in the particular method of non-co-operation adopted in 1920 to give it a retrial or to find out a third thing. It is for those like me, who still believe in that form of non-co-operation, to demonstrate its present utility, so that the

sceptics might veer round. But I must confess that I can present nothing in the shape of a fireworks display to those who came to non-co-operation, not with an inward conviction, but for the alluring promise it made of immediate deliverance. That deliverance in the way it was expected not having come, who shall blame them if they fall back upon the original programme, with such changes as it is capable of admitting? After all, those who have led an active political life in the old fashion, cannot possibly be expected to sit idle, whilst 'dreamers' like me expect to evolve an intensely active programme out of a 'harmless toy' like the spinning wheel. They have brought the Congress into being, and I must wait for their conversion before the Congress can become a purely spinning association.

"It is open to anybody to oppose hand-spinning as an alternative franchise or the wearing of khaddar as part of the franchise. It is equally open to the others to insist on hand-spinning and khaddar being retained. We may cavil if we like at people's opinions. That would be a sign of intolerance. Each one should have faith in his own programme and must be prepared to work it even single-handed if necessary.

"Experience teaches me that there is ample room for both the programmes in the country, for spinning and council entry. I must, whilst I retain my own views about council entry in the abstract, support those council-goers who are likely to serve my ideals better, who have greater powers of resistance and greater faith in the wheel and khaddar. These are the Swarajists in general.

"A spinning association does become a necessity under the new scheme. But it must be under the Congress patronage so long as the Congress continues to extend it. I have great regard for the Congress to want to do without it. It is the one institution that has weathered many a breeze fair or foul. It is the fruit of years of patient labour given to it by educated India. I shall wilfully do nothing to decrease its usefulness."

A fortnight later, on the eve of the A.-I.C.C., Gandhi again appealed to the members to muster strong and give their unbiased verdict on the changes proposed:

"The change sought to be made in the constitution can only be justified, if there is a unanimous and insistent demand for it. Unanimity and insistence can be proved by every member attending even at considerable inconvenience and sacrifice, if necessary.

It will not do for the members to assume anything as a foregone conclusion, and let those who attend do what they like. Absence from the meeting will be presumed to be a sign of want of sense of responsibility unless the absence is otherwise duly accounted for. Members should realize that I have not worried them throughout the year, and but for the emergency I would certainly not have worried them now.

"It is my intention too, at the same meeting, if all goes well, to inaugurate the All-India Spinners' Association. I would like all khaddar workers who are interested in its inauguration, and who have valuable suggestions to make, to attend at Patna whether they are members of the A.-I.C.C. or not.

"The idea running through my mind is to lighten the burden of the forthcoming Congress, to adjust differences that there may be amongst Congressmen, and to explore avenues, if any, of common action by all parties, so that the Congress may be free to discuss and initiate new policies and new programmes if any."

Week after week, he explained through *Young India* the necessity for the change in the Congress constitution. He educated public opinion by giving a forum to his critics. "Is it not a Himalayan blunder?" asked some critic. "Is it not over-confidence if not inconsistency?" asked another. Gandhi coolly argued:

"A man of truth must ever be confident, if he has also equal need to be diffident. His devotion to truth demands the fullest confidence. His consciousness of the fallibility of human nature must make him humble and even ready to retrace his steps immediately he discovers his error. It makes no difference to his confidence that he has previously made Himalayan blunders. His confession and penance make him stronger for future action. Discovery of his errors makes the votary of truth more cautious of believing things and forming conclusions, but once he has made up his mind, his confidence must remain unshaken. His errors may result in men's reliance upon his judgements being shaken, but he must not doubt the truth of his position once he has come to a conclusion. It should be borne in mind that my errors have been errors of calculation and judging men, not in appreciating the true nature of truth and ahimsa or in their application. Indeed, these errors and my prompt confessions have made me surer, if possible, of my insight into the implications of truth and ahimsa. For, I am convinced that

my action in suspending civil disobedience at Ahmedabad, Bombay and Bardoli has advanced the cause of India's freedom and world's peace. I am convinced that because of the suspensions we are nearer swaraj than we would have been without, and this I say in spite of despair being written in thick black letters on the horizon. Such being my deep conviction, I cannot help being confident of my present position as regards the Swarajists and other matters. It is traceable to one source only, a lively understanding of the implications of truth and ahimsa."

The transference of power into the hands of the Swarajists was completed by the A.-I.C.C. session at Patna on September 22. The Swaraj Party was now absolved from all obligations of the Belgaum pact, and now anybody paying four annas annually or 2,000 yards of self-spun yarn was entitled to be a member of the Congress. The Swaraj Party was no longer a wing of the Congress but the Congress itself: "It is resolved that the Congress do take up and carry on all such political work as may be necessary in the interests of the country, and for this purpose do employ the whole of the machinery and fund of the Congress, save and except such funds and assets as are specially earmarked to the All-India Khaddar Board and provincial khaddar boards, which shall be handed over to the All-India Spinners' Association."

The important event at Patna was the birth of the All-India Spinners' Association on September 22, 1925:

"Whereas the time has arrived for the establishment of an expert organization for the development of hand-spinning and khaddar, and whereas a permanent organization, unaffected and controlled by politics, political changes or political bodies, an organization called the All-India Spinners' Association is hereby established with the consent of the All-India Congress Committee, as an integral part of the Congress organization, but with independent existence and powers."

The association consisted of members, associates and donors with an executive council consisting of Gandhi, Shaukat Ali, Rajendra Prasad, Satish Chandra Dasgupta, Maganlal Gandhi, Jamnalal Bajaj (treasurer) and three secretaries, Shuaib Qureshi, Shankarlal Banker and Jawaharlal Nehru. Every member of the association was under an obligation to spin 1,000 yards of yarn per month, wear khaddar and propagate the charkha.

The change in the Congress constitution was very hotly discussed at the A.-I.C.C. but the majorities for the different parts of the resolution were not as large as Gandhi had expected or desired. Commenting on the change, he wrote in *Young India*:

"As to the substance of the change made there is really nothing drastic in it. No interest is injured. No single person is disfranchised. No single party is in a worse position than it was before the change. The non-co-operators need not complain because non-co-operation as a national policy has been suspended. The constructive programme still remains unaffected. Hand-spinning and khaddar still remain part of the national programme. The council programme which was being worked by the Swaraj Party in the name of the Congress will now be worked by the Congress through the Swaraj Party. This may be called a distinction without a difference. Those who put hand-spinning before political programme and those who believe in hand-spinning to the exclusion of any political programme, are not injured because they have a separate organization for its development and because hand-spinning still remains as an alternative part of the franchise and the use of khaddar on the Congress and other public occasions still remains obligatory. Nor are the other parties who are outside the Congress adversely affected by it. Under the Belgaum resolution they had to convert or negotiate with the no-changers and the Swarajists, but now they have only to convert or confer with the Swarajists. The change in every respect extends the right of representation and makes the union of all the parties less difficult than it was. No Congressman can possibly resent a change in extension of popular liberty. What is more, the change is in accordance with the requirements of those who have hitherto been identified with the Congress."

One pleasing aspect of the session to Gandhi was that there was a definite inclination on the part of the majority to make khaddar the national dress for all Congressmen. The motion to that effect was not pressed only when it became clear that it would embarrass the Swaraj Party. But an improvement upon the Belgaum resolution was accepted to the effect that whilst khaddar was obligatory on Congress and other public occasions, it was expected of all Congressmen to wear khaddar on all occasions and in no case to use foreign cloth. Gandhi made every concession to the Swaraj Party not because there was no response to khaddar franchise—for there

were 10,000 members on the roll—but to strengthen the Swarajists as much as he possibly could.

But it was ordained otherwise; the Swaraj Party was cracking. The Swaraj Party had invaded the legislatures with the declared object of "opposition from within". The Government decided to have a hand in it by creating opposition and disruption within the ranks of the Swarajists. High office and patronage in innumerable ways were placed in the way of weaker members of the party. Individuals here and there began to slip away to the other side. Anti-Congress parties like the Justice Party of Madras got every encouragement from the Government. Formation of new parties was the order of the day. The Punjab National Unionist Party was formed in July 1924 to work out the reform scheme. A little later the Independent Party was formed in the Central Assembly with Jinnah as leader and it gradually started working in opposition to the Swarajists. The election of the President of the Bengal Council, which took place in August 1925, was a straw which showed the way the wind was blowing. The final contest was between two candidates—an independent and a Swarajist—and in the result, the independent defeated his opponent by six votes. A few hours after his adoption as the Swaraj Party's candidate for the presidentship, Dr. A. Suhrawardy had an interview with the Governor of Bengal. Gandhi took strong objection to this, saying that it was a most improper act on his part and that he had thereby "sold his country". Thereupon Dr. Suhrawardy resigned from the Swaraj Party saying, "I deem political hara-kiri more honourable than living under the new tyranny." Gandhi stuck to his statement and added: "I cannot help saying that it is a healthy rule to prohibit members of the Swaraj Party from meeting or seeing Government officials without the permission of the party."

The Swaraj Party stood for a more extreme political policy than the other parties. But the difference was one of degree, not of kind. The consistent opposition soon gave way to co-operation, and the indomitable Motilal Nehru himself accepted a seat on the Indian Sandhurst Committee, popularly known as the Skeen Committee, in 1925.

Vithalbhai Patel, a Swarajist stalwart, was elected as the first non-official President of the Assembly in August. "I have accepted this office with my eyes open," he remarked, "and I fully realize the

implications attaching to it." He had given the question anxious thought, said Patel, and had come to the conclusion that he could serve India better by accepting the position. Swarajists had been described as destructive critics; it was now their duty to show that they also knew how to construct. The Viceroy had pleaded for co-operation. His predecessor had pleaded for co-operation. "And I also plead for co-operation," said Patel. He declared he had ceased to be a party-man and he belonged to all parties. He asked the leader of his party to pass a resolution absolving him from all obligations as a Swarajist. As for the rumours regarding his relations with the Viceroy, he brushed them aside. If the duties of his office required it, he would call on His Excellency ten times a day.

Soon after the A.-I.C.C. at Patna, on October 8, the Swarajist leader of the Central Province, S. B. Tambe, accepted the office of executive councillor in the Government of his province, an act, which, ultimately, was to split the Swaraj Party from top to bottom. Motilal Nehru condemned Tambe and a violent controversy at once broke out in the press. A very significant statement made at the outset of the controversy by a leading Swarajist, Dr. B. S. Moonje, showed that defections from the Swaraj Party were not going to be confined to Tambe. Dr. Moonje, whilst admitting that he was not at present in favour of the Swarajists' accepting office, declared that after the failure of the non-co-operation movement the only policy left was responsive co-operation. Of even greater significance was a declaration issued by Jayakar, the leader of the Swarajists in the Bombay Legislative Council, a few days after Dr. Moonje's. The difference between Tambe's acceptance of office and Patel's, said Jayakar, was merely technical, and added that the time had arrived for the Swarajists to meet to reconsider their programme. If the party's programme was a success then it must be strengthened; if it was not, then the Swarajists should accept office.

On October 26 a meeting of the executive committee of the Berar Swaraj Party passed only a sentence of condemnation on Tambe, and declared that in its opinion the time had come for the Swaraj Party to adopt the policy of responsive co-operation. A prominent Swarajist from Maharashtra, N. C. Kelkar, not only had sent a congratulatory wire to Tambe, but on the eve of the executive meeting of the Swaraj Party, criticized the rigid party discipline. "There was a time," he said, "when in the assembly we could make

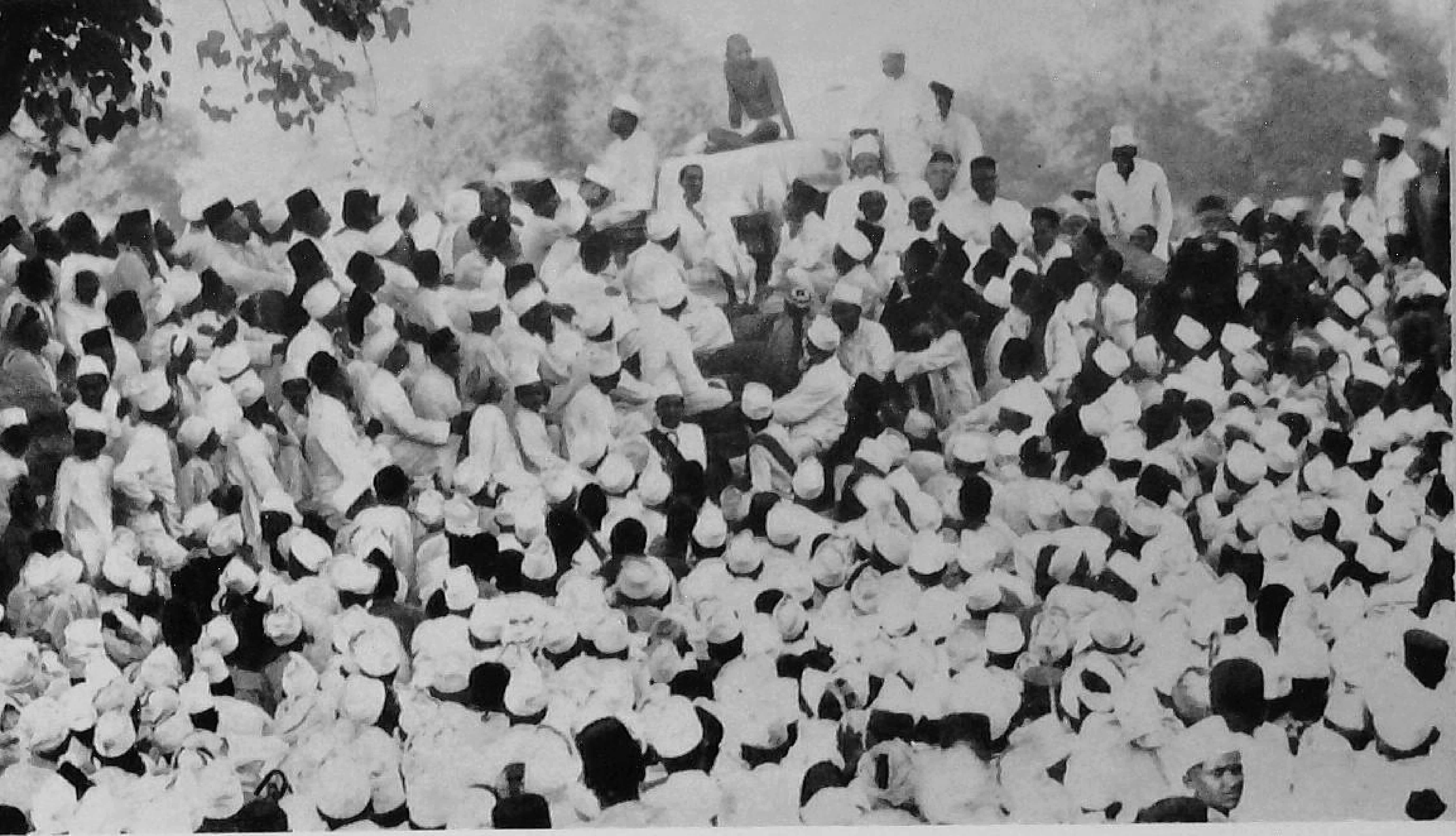
no constructive proposal, say a motion even, to refer a bill to a select committee. Then came a time when we were allowed to make such motions but not to take a seat on any of the committees. Then came a time when we could accept only elective seats on committees. And then came a time when we could accept nominated seats on committees under a special dispensation of executive authority. Now I grant that all these developments were natural and were symptoms of a definite new policy, a policy somewhat different from the policy of hide-bound obstruction."

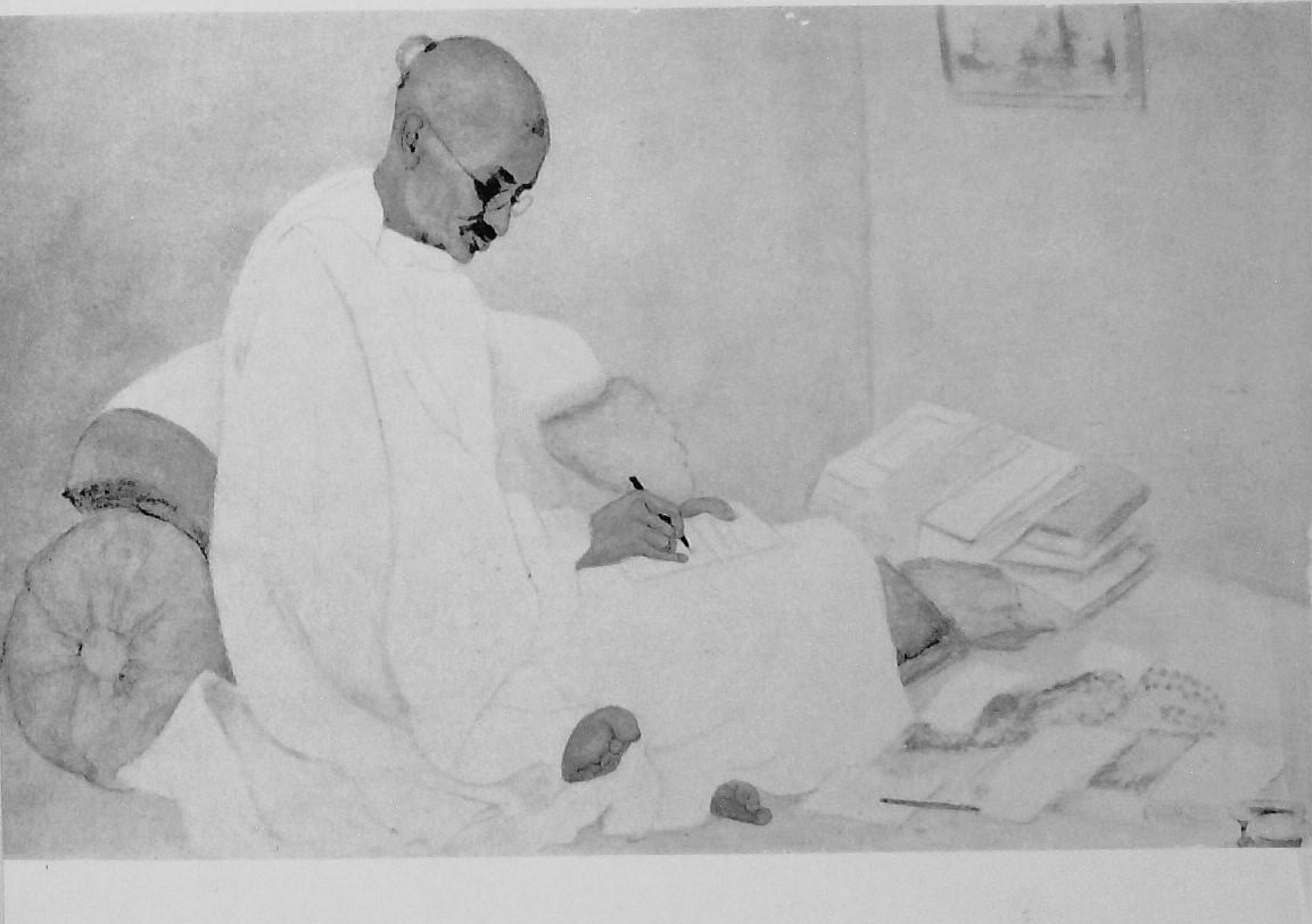
The executive meeting of the All-India Swaraj Party held on November 1 at Nagpur passed a resolution condemning Tambe's action, which was described as a flagrant act of indiscipline and treachery to the party. From Nagpur, Motilal Nehru hastened to Bombay in order to crush the revolt led by Jayakar and Kelkar, who, on November 10, resigned their membership of the executive council of the All-India Swaraj Party. In a public speech at Bombay Motilal Nehru outlined the future course of his party. He said that the Swaraj Party stood for its own progress, which included co-operation and non-co-operation, construction and destruction as the occasion and national interest demanded. The party considered itself bound to sacrifice, if necessary even non-co-operation to the interests of the country. Changes which were the very essence of life were inevitable in the Swaraj Party which was pre-eminently a party of action. He concluded his speech saying that the change in the party's programme, which some demanded, could be made only by the Congress at its impending session at Cawnpore. At the intervention of Lajpat Rai on December 4, a meeting between the leaders of the Swaraj Party and those favouring responsive co-operation was held in Bombay, and there it was agreed that in view of the approaching session of the Congress all public controversy on the question of the Swaraj Party's policy should cease until after the Congress met.

Gandhi kept mum over the wordy battle of the Swarajists and continued his tour through Bihar, U. P. and Cutch. The incessant travelling which he had undertaken since the fast had undermined his health and he was compelled to travel second much against his principles. To lighten his burden Rajendra Prasad absolved him from his tour in Bihar beyond October 15 and two days in a week were reserved by Gandhi for editing *Young India*.

*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi deep in thought, 1925



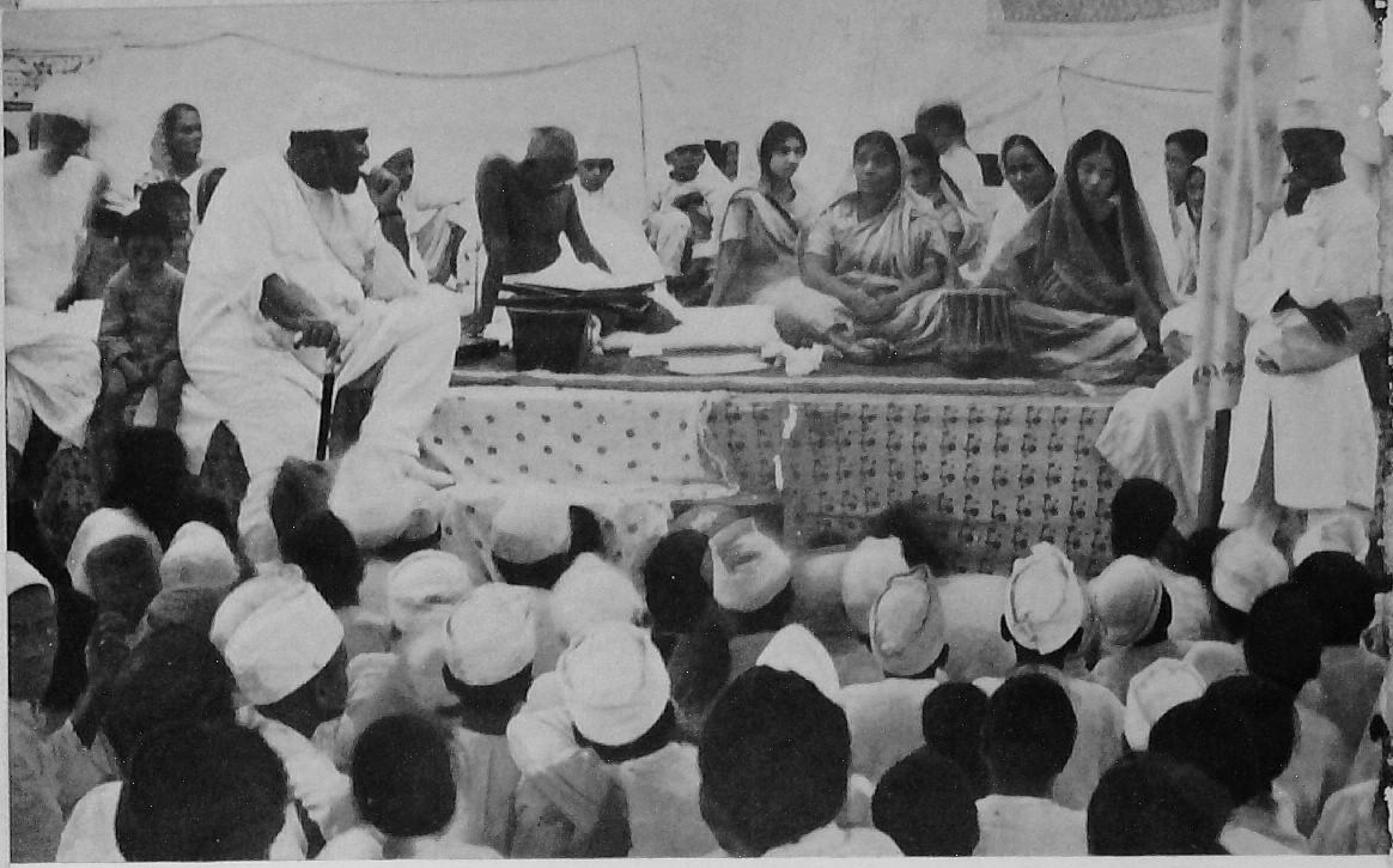


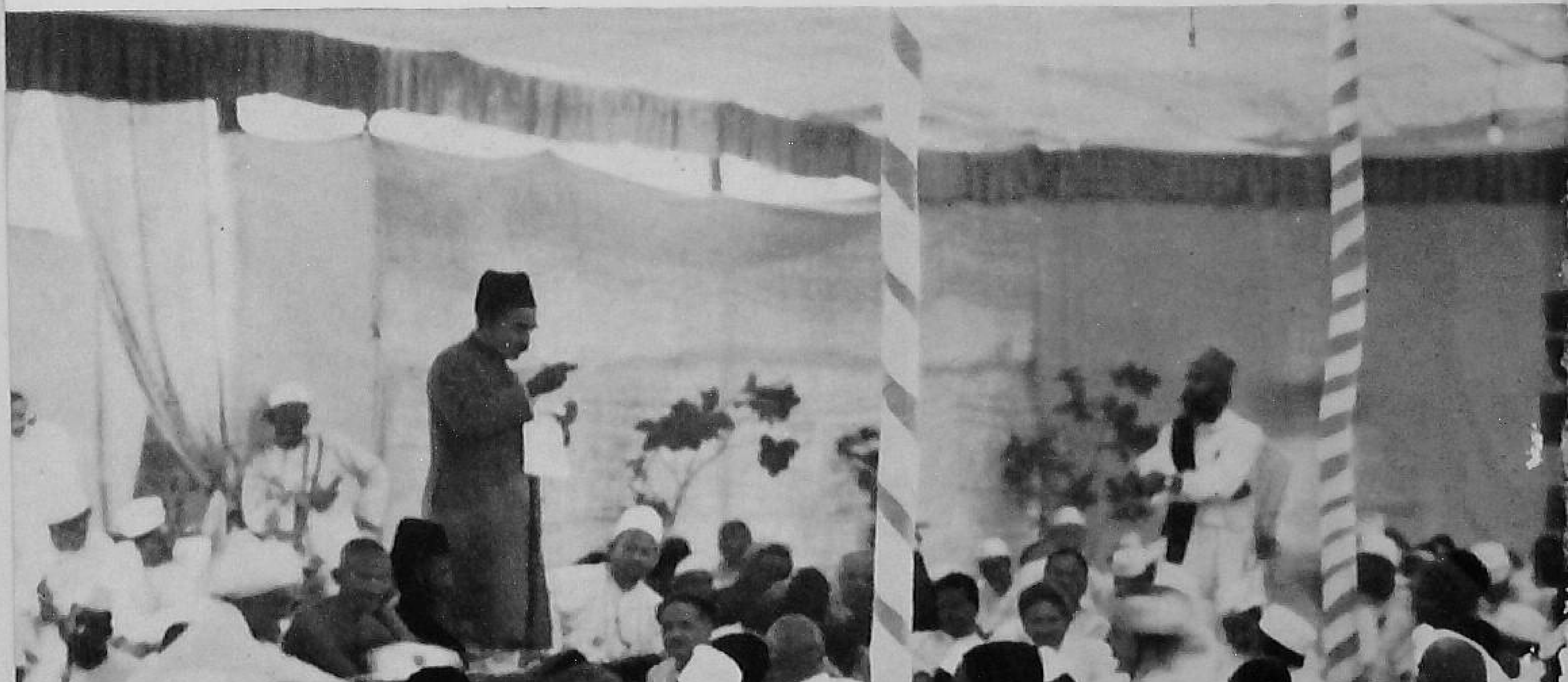
At a mass meeting in Ganadevi, Surat district, 1925 *Courtesy : Rangildas Kapadia*

Gandhi attending to his correspondence—from a painting, 1925 *Courtesy : O. C. Gangoli*

*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi addressing an eager audience in a Gujarat village, 1925





*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi addressing a meeting of untouchables in Bombay—on the dais are Shaukat Ali and Mrs. Naidu, 1926
At a Subjects Committee meeting of the Congress

In Bihar, the silent social work among the Mundas and other aboriginal tribes by Congress workers was a pleasant surprise for Gandhi. The work of reformation had begun since 1921 and many aboriginals gave up eating carrion and some even took to vegetarianism. Among these tribes he came across a colony of Bhaktas who wore khaddar woven by themselves. Many of them had walked miles with their charkhas on their shoulders and 400 of them sat spinning at the meeting addressed by Gandhi. Wherever he went he noticed the enduring effect of the movement even on those who were politically neutral. Pandas at Devgarh, the simple Mahuris and Santals were participating in the constructive work.

The Congress workers, in addition to organizing khadi work, were giving the village folk such medical relief as was possible with their limited medical knowledge. They were responsible for 7,000 spinning wheels and 2,500 handlooms weaving hand-spun yarn in the villages of Bihar.

During his two-day stay in U. P. he received addresses in Ballia, Benares and Lucknow. At Sitapur, where he attended the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, he found an occasion to chastise the artificial language used in most of the addresses: "Highly Sanskritized Hindi is as avoidable as highly Persianized Urdu. Both the speeches are not intelligible to the masses. I have accepted Hindustani as a common medium because it is understood by over twenty crores of people of India. This is not the artificial Lucknavi Urdu or the *sammelani* Hindi. And one would expect at least a *sammelan* address to be such as would be understood by both Hindus and Muslims of the common type. The animal who if he pronounces the name Ishwar dreads to pronounce the name Khuda, or the one who would pronounce the name Khuda but would regard it as sinful to utter the name Ishwar, is not an attractive being."

He told the audience that the Hindi propaganda in U. P. could only lie in improving the literature and creating an atmosphere for the advent of a Hindi Rabindranath and that the *sammelan* should devote its attention outside U. P. to popularize Hindustani speech and by publishing the standard works of other languages in Devanagari script.

During the last week of October Gandhi undertook a fortnight's tour of Cutch. A public address was presented to him at Bhuj. It eulogized his services in the cause of untouchables, and stated

that in Cutch the problem of untouchability was being tackled and requested him to give the benefit of his advice as to what more they could do in the direction. But in flat contradiction of all these sentiments, the untouchables were confined to a remote corner of the meeting. It was not a new experience to Gandhi and he administered a solemn warning. "I should not mince matters," he said. "I have been calling myself an untouchable and a sweeper, not out of arrogance, or ignorance, or because I am westernized, but because I may serve them all the better on that account. The western influence had nothing to do with my views about untouchability. They are the deliberate convictions of a man born and bred up in a purely orthodox Hindu atmosphere and tradition, of a man who had practised Hindu religious teaching, by actually imitating his orthodox parents, of a man who had tried to study the human body as much as the dweller of that tabernacle, of a man who had given years of study to the shastras in perfect faith and devotion, of a man who had wandered throughout the length and breadth of India, discussing the matter with shastris and pundits, and who was more confirmed in his views as a result. You should have counted with them, when you invited me. But even if you feel now that you have made a mistake in inviting a man of such views, you can retrace your steps, and courteously send me back. I assure you that I shall appreciate it and not misunderstand it. You must know that whilst I would feel honoured if you excluded me, I should feel deeply hurt if you excluded those friends. I cannot bear to be present in a place where they are slighted or insulted, than a student of the Ramayana can bear to stay in a place where the name of Rama is dragged in the mire. Pray, therefore, either permit them to come and sit with you, or me to go and sit amongst them. The cordon that you have drawn goes right against the grain of my being. Either remove that cordon or put me with these my brothers. But mind you, I want you to do what you do with the courage of your conviction, and not to please me. If you exclude me, I shall congratulate you on your courage and your instinct of self-preservation. If you admit the untouchables, I adjure you to do so with the maturest deliberation, so that you might not later have to be in the sorry plight of those people at Mangrol who after I left them recanted their views and expiated for their sins. Let this be the first object-lesson to you in satyagraha."

The warning went home and when the vote was taken, there was a slight majority for the orthodox view, and with perfect pride and pleasure Gandhi asked for permission to go and address them now from amongst the untouchables. There was not the least flutter as the table was removed by the volunteers beyond the cordon, and in a few minutes the audience were listening to him addressing them from the new platform. After having congratulated them on the courage of their conviction, Gandhi laid down the law for all future meetings: "No cordons. Reserve spaces, if you like, for the orthodox as you have reserved accommodation on railway trains for Europeans and Anglo-Indians. I could bear to address a meeting from where the untouchables were entirely excluded, but not one where they sat with the ban of insult and inferiority."

The second day at Bhuj was noteworthy for two features. One was the appeal for funds for cow protection and the other in which Gandhi exploded the theory put forward from some quarters that money collected from Cutchees ought to be utilized in Cutch. As regards cow protection he said: "The cause has suffered a lot of harm at the hands of so-called *gosevaks*. We forget that a hundred times the number of cows killed for *kurbani* by the Musalmans are killed for purposes of trade. The slaughter-houses in our country are maintained mainly for the army and for hides. The narrowness and ignorance of our millionaires and the torpid conscience of our religious teachers are responsible for the maintenance of most of these slaughter-houses. The cows are almost all owned by the Hindus and the butchers would find their trade gone if the Hindus refused to sell the cows. Every one of us who uses leather foot-wear is in part responsible for the slaughter, for the tanneries are said easily to treat hide of slaughtered animals than carcasses. If, therefore, we are serious about serving these animals, our millionaires will have to maintain tanneries and dairies, and we shall have to be tanning and dairy experts. The need for ample funds for the purpose cannot, therefore, be exaggerated."

As regards the propaganda of "Cutchee money for the Cutchees" he referred at length: "A word to my impatient Cutchee friends. Why should I come all the way to Cutch to collect money for use in Cutch? Do I not know that you are capable enough of looking after your own internal needs? And is it proper for you to invite me to Cutch to collect money for you? For your own needs

I know you can collect money yourself and you must do so. If you trust me with money, you must do so in the fullest consciousness that I know how to use it and where to use it. Do the Marwadi friends who give me money whenever I make a call on them make any condition? They gave nearly a lakh of rupees for Hindi propaganda in Madras, they are giving me money for untouchability and cow protection. Do they ever insist that their money should be used in Marwad? I am deeply pained to have to hear of such a thing from Cutchees known for their philanthropic spirit. I warn you this narrow provincialism does not become you. It bodes ill for you and for all."

At Mandvi the orthodox people led by a wealthy sadhu decided to improve on what they thought was the mistake of Bhuj. There were to be two compartments as at Bhuj, but there were also to be two entrances—one for the untouchables, and another for the touchables. But Gandhi's entry by the untouchables' entrance disturbed their calculations and angered the sadhu. The next day the meeting was no less stage-managed. Gandhi and the reformers were permitted to enter by the untouchables' entrance, but care was taken to see that the orthodox enclosure remained inviolate. The president could not make up his mind to sit on the same dais with Gandhi, and made himself ludicrous by an attempt to drop the casket containing the address into Gandhi's hand rather than hand it to him and get polluted. He thought he was acting on Gandhi's advice of the previous evening, when Gandhi said that the sadhu, instead of leaving the meeting, could have dropped the address into his hands without incurring the pollution of the touch. Gandhi, otherwise touchable, became an untouchable that evening, because before their very eyes he had touched the untouchables.

At Mundra there was an enclosure for the untouchables and the reformers, but every attempt was made to prevent a single touchable of the place from venturing into that enclosure. The president, all the Hindu volunteers, even the Muslim gentry of the town, and the teacher of the untouchable boys' school sat in the touchables' enclosure. And yet they vied with one another in paying empty compliments to Gandhi for his satyagraha and ahimsa. If Mandvi made itself ludicrous, Mundra was sickening and cut Gandhi to the very marrow. In his speech that evening he exposed the sham and cried out in bitter agony: "If this is Hinduism, O Lord, my fervent

prayer is that the soonest it is destroyed the best." He warned the organizers of the tour against taking him to Anjar and implored the people to search and cleanse their hearts. But the organizers fought shy of abandoning Anjar. So to Anjar he went.

Gandhi suggested to the orthodox president who was also his host to drop the meeting and the address and to hold instead a general meeting in the untouchables' quarters, and then, if necessary, a conference with the orthodox next day. The host argued, "We have already made the arrangements. Is it not natural that we may not accept some of your views? We must do honour to you and you should not deprive us of the privilege of listening to your advice." "But," said Gandhi, "what is the meaning of honouring me, when you do not accept the thing nearest my heart, when you insult those that I hold dearer to me than life itself? And there should be some proportion, some decorum observed. I have addressed meetings of Europeans, who share none of my views. But they know their business better. They make no secret of the fact that I would not be spared at the meeting and yet they know how to honour their guest. At Calcutta they had a strictly vegetarian lunch entirely out of regard for me. But here? You seize a temporary arrangement suggested by me at Bhuj, and turn and twist it to your advantage and do not hesitate to reduce it to an absurdity as at Mundra. How would it look if I tell my son that he is at liberty to abuse me if he likes, and he makes it a point to abuse me to his heart's content every morning? That is what you have done. The president, I suggested at the first day's meeting at Mandvi, could have dropped the address into my hands from a distance and the next day, the president lost no time in benefiting by the suggestion. Is that the way you want to honour me?"

The reception committee met and decided upon an elaborate plan for the enclosure and the platform, the president was to speak from a distance, eight members of the committee to sit amongst the untouchables, and the rich man of the town to hand the address to Gandhi—not to drop it as at Mandvi—but, of course, to have a purificatory bath on going home. Gandhi accepted the defeat, went to the meeting and received the address.

In the speech he thanked them for the love and attention with which they had looked to his physical comforts. Cutch had yielded to none in that respect. But he had not gone there for his comforts

and he wanted something else, which it would be painful for him to say and for them to hear. Religion all the world over offered God as the solace and comfort for all in agony. Draupadi when she was in distress, and when her husbands had failed her, cried out to Krishna and was comforted. Sita in Ashokavana had only Rama's name on her lips and was comforted. In his own distress, therefore, he would think of Rama that evening and repeat his name. He had never done so before in a public meeting and advisedly. He could not do so before mixed audiences of Hindus, Muslims and Christians. But he could think of no other recourse that evening, and with apology to those who did not like the course, he wanted to take Rama's name, turn his agonized heart in contemplation to Him, and be comforted.

Gandhi gave a sharp rebuke to municipalities who were quite generous in presenting addresses but were niggardly in their duty towards the public. He wrote in *Young India:*

"The fashion, that seems now to have become permanent, of presenting leading Congressmen with addresses by municipalities and local boards has resulted in my coming in touch with the working of municipalities all over India. I have come to the conclusion from my observation of so many municipalities that the greatest problem they have to tackle is sanitation. I am aware that it is a stupendous problem. Some national habits are bad beyond description, and yet so ingrained as to defy all human effort. Wherever I go, this insanitation obtrudes itself upon my gaze in some shape or another. It is, or should be, one of the privileges of municipalities and local boards to make it their chief concern to eradicate insanitation within their limits. If we are to live in cities, if we are to live an organized life, if we are to grow in health and wisdom, we shall have to get rid of insanitation some day or other. The sooner we do so the better. Let us not postpone everything till swaraj is attained. Some things no doubt will only be done when that much-wished-for event has happened. But it will never happen if we do not do the many things which can be done today as easily as under swaraj, and which are signs of corporate and civilized national life. No institution can handle this problem better and more speedily than our municipalities. They have, so far as I am aware, all the powers they need in this direction; and they can get more, if necessary. Only the will is often wanting. It is not recognized that a

municipality does not deserve to exist which does not possess model closets and where streets and lanes are not scrupulously clean all the hours of the day and night. But the reform cannot be brought about without infinite application on the part of members of municipalities and local boards. To think of all the municipalities in the aggregate and to wait till every one had begun the work is indefinitely to postpone the reform. Let those who have got the will and the ability commence the reform in right earnest now, and the rest will follow."

On November 5 the tour of Cutch ended, and Gandhi went to Sabarmati for rest.

## *Experiments With Truth*

1925

Gandhi's excessive stress on the charkha was ridiculed by many intellectuals and Rabindranath Tagore was foremost among those who was provoked by public criticism to express his views on the cult of spinning. On November 5, 1925 Gandhi came out with a reply in *Young India:*

"The criticism is a sharp rebuke to Acharya Ray for his impatience of the poet's and Acharya Seal's position regarding the charkha, and a gentle rebuke to me for my exclusive and excessive love of it. Let the public understand that the poet does not deny its great economic value. Let them know that he signed the appeal for the All-India Deshbandhu Memorial after he had written his criticism. He signed the appeal after studying its contents carefully and even as he signed it, he sent me the message that he had written something on the charkha which might not quite please me. I knew what was coming. But it has not displeased me. Why should mere disagreement with my views displease? If every disagreement were to displease, since no two men agree on all points, life would be a bundle of unpleasant sensations and, therefore, a perfect nuisance. On the contrary the frank criticism pleases me. For, our friendship becomes all the richer for our disagreements. Friends to be friends are not called upon to agree even on most points. Only disagreements must have no sharpness, much less bitterness, about them, and I admit that there is none about the poet's criticism.

"I am obliged to make these prefatory remarks as dame rumour has whispered that jealousy is the root of all that criticism. Such baseless suspicion betrays an atmosphere of weakness and intolerance. A little reflection must remove all ground for such a cruel charge. Of what should the poet be jealous of me? Jealousy presupposes the possibility of rivalry. I have never succeeded in writing a single rhyme in my life. There is nothing of the poet about

me. I cannot aspire after his greatness. He is the undisputed master of it. The world today does not possess his equal as a poet. My 'mahatmaship' has no relation to the poet's undisputed position. It is time to realize that our fields are absolutely different and at no point overlapping. The poet lives in a magnificent world of his own creation, his world of ideas. I am a slave of somebody else's creation, the spinning wheel. The poet makes his *gopis* dance to the tune of his flute. I wander after my beloved Sita, the charkha, and seek to deliver her from the ten-headed monster from Japan, Manchester, Paris, etc. The poet is an inventor; he creates, destroys and recreates. I am an explorer and having discovered a thing I must cling to it. The poet presents the world with new and attractive things from day to day. I can merely show the hidden possibilities of old and worn-out things. The world easily finds an honourable place for the magician who produces new and dazzling things. I have to struggle laboriously to find a corner for my worn-out things. Thus there is no competition between us. But I may say in all humility that we complement each the other's activity.

"The fact is that the poet's criticism is a poetic licence and he who takes it literally is in danger of finding himself in an awkward corner. A poet has said that Solomon arrayed in all his glory was not like one of the lilies of the field. He clearly referred to the natural beauty and innocence of the lily contrasted with the artificiality of Solomon's glory and his sinfulness in spite of his many good deeds. Or take the poetic licence in 'It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.' We know that no camel has ever passed through the eye of a needle and we know that rich men like Janaka have entered the Kingdom of Heaven. Or take the simile of human teeth being likened to the pomegranate seed. Foolish women who have taken the poetical exaggeration literally have been found to disfigure and even harm their teeth. Painters and poets are obliged to exaggerate the proportions of their figures in order to give true perspective. Those who take the poet's denunciation of the charkha literally will be doing an injustice to the poet and an injury to themselves.

"The poet does not, he is not expected, he has no need, to read *Young India*. All he knows about the movement is what he has picked up from table-talk. He has, therefore, denounced what he has imagined to be the excesses of the charkha cult.

"He thinks, for instance, that I want everybody to spin the whole of his time to the exclusion of all other activity, that is to say, that I want the poet to forsake his muse, the farmer his plough, the lawyer his brief and the doctor his lancet. So far is this from truth that I have asked no one to abandon his calling, but on the contrary to adorn it by giving every day only thirty minutes to spinning as sacrifice for the whole nation. I have indeed asked the famishing man or woman who is idle for want of any work whatsoever to spin for a living and the half-starved farmer to spin during his leisure hours to supplement his slender resources. If the poet span half an hour daily, his poetry would gain in richness. For it would then represent the poor man's wants and woes in a more forcible manner than now.

"The poet thinks that the charkha is calculated to bring about a deathlike sameness in the nation and thus imagining he would shun it if he could. The truth is, that the charkha is intended to realize the essential and living oneness of interest among India's myriads. Behind the magnificent and kaleidoscopic variety one discovers in nature a unity of purpose, design and form which is equally unmistakable. No two men are absolutely alike, not even twins, yet there is much that is indispensably common to all mankind. And behind the commonness of form there is the same life pervading all. The idea of sameness or oneness was carried by Shankar to its utmost logical and natural limit and he exclaimed that there was only one Truth, one God—Brahman—and all form, *nama rupa* was illusion or illusory, evanescent. We need not debate whether what we see is unreal; and whether the real behind the unreality is what we do not see. Let both be equally real, if you will. All I say is there is a sameness, identity or oneness behind the multiplicity and variety. So do I hold that behind a variety of occupations there is an indispensable sameness also of occupation. Is not agriculture common to the vast majority of mankind? Even so was spinning common not long ago to a vast majority of mankind. Just as both prince and peasant must eat and clothe themselves, so must they labour for supplying their common wants. The prince may do so if only by way of symbol and sacrifice, but that much is indispensable for him if he will be true to himself and his people. Europe may not realize this vital necessity at the present moment, because it has made of exploitation of non-European races a religion. But it is a

false religion bound to perish in the near future. The non-European races will not for ever allow themselves to be exploited. I have endeavoured to show a way out that is peaceful, humane, noble. It may be rejected. If it is, the alternative is a tug of war, in which each will try to pull down the other. Then, when non-Europeans will seek to exploit the Europeans, the truth of the charkha will have to be realized. Just as, if we are to live, we must breathe not air imported from England nor eat food so imported, so may we not import cloth made in England. I do not hesitate to carry the doctrine to its logical limit and say that Bengal dare not import her cloth even from Bombay or from Banga-Laxmi. If Bengal will live her natural and free life without exploiting the rest of India or the world outside, she must manufacture her cloth in her villages as she grows her corn there. Machinery has its place; it has come to stay. But it must not be allowed to displace the necessary human labour. An imported plough is a good thing. But if by some chance one man could plough up by some mechanical invention of his the whole of the land of India and control all the agricultural produce and if the millions had no other occupation, they would starve, and being idle, they would become dunces, as many have already become. There is hourly danger of many more being reduced to that unenviable state. I would welcome every improvement in the cottage machine but I know that it is criminal to displace the hand labour by the introduction of power-driven spindles unless one is at the same time ready to give millions of farmers some other occupation in their homes.

"The Irish analogy does not take us very far. It is perfect in so far as it enables us to realize the necessity of economic co-operation. But Indian circumstances being different, the method of working out co-operation is necessarily different. For Indian distress every effort at co-operation has to centre round the charkha, if it is to apply to the majority of the inhabitants of this vast peninsula 1,900 miles long and 1,500 broad. A Sir Gangaram may give us a model farm which can be no model for the penniless Indian farmer who has hardly two to three acres of land which every day runs the risk of being still further cut up.

"Round the charkha, that is, amidst the people who have shed their idleness and who have understood the value of co-operation, a national servant would build up a programme of anti-malaria

campaign, improved sanitation, settlement of village disputes, conservation and breeding of cattle and hundreds of other beneficial activities. Wherever the charkha work is fairly established, all such ameliorative activity is going on according to the capacity of the villagers and the workers concerned.

"It is not my purpose to traverse all the poet's arguments in detail. Where the differences between us are not fundamental—and these I have endeavoured to state—there is nothing in the poet's argument which I cannot endorse and still maintain my position regarding the charkha. The many things about the charkha which he has ridiculed I have never said. The merits I have claimed for the charkha remain undamaged by the poet's battery."

The moral, religious, political and economic problems of the day engaged his full time. There was the problem of opium in Orissa; there was the responsibility of the All-India Spinners' Association; the South African question had once again cropped up; there was correspondence from China, Germany and America soliciting his guidance or explanation; there was the Hindu-Muslim problem as difficult as ever.

In the midst of heavy work he undertook to write a chapter a week of *The Story of My Experiments with Truth.* Four years earlier at the instance of his co-workers, he had agreed to write his autobiography. But he had scarcely turned over the first sheet in 1921 when riots broke out in Bombay and he did not proceed further. He had intended to restart it in Yeravda jail but he was released before he could begin writing. But at last, on December 3, 1925 the beginning of his epoch-making autobiography was made in *Young India.* In introducing the venture, he wrote: "I simply want to tell the story of my numerous experiments with truth, and as my life is nothing but those experiments, it is true the story will take the shape of an autobiography. I will not mind it, if every page of it speaks only of my experiments. What I want to achieve, what I have been striving and pining for these thirty years, is self-realization, that is, to see God face to face. I live and move and have my being in the pursuit of this goal. All that I do by way of speaking or writing and all my ventures in the political field are directed to the same end. If anything I write in these articles strike the reader as smacking of pride, he must take it that there is something wrong with my quest, and my glimpses are no more than a mirage. Let

hundreds like me perish, but let the truth triumph. My purpose is to describe experiments in the science of satyagraha and not at all to describe how good I am. In judging myself I shall try to be as harsh as truth, as I want others also to do likewise."

In the same issue of *Young India* appeared a note on Gandhi's latest seven days' fast commenced on November 24. He wrote it on the last day of his fast illustrating a poignant instance of his constant experiment with truth:

"The public will have to neglect my fasts and cease to worry about them. They are a part of my being. I can as well do without my eyes, as I can without fasts. What the eyes are for the outer world, fasts are for the inner. And much as I should like the latest fast to be the very last in my life, something within me tells me that I might have to go through many such ordeals and, who knows, much more trying. I may be wholly wrong. Then the world will be able to write an epitaph over my ashes: 'Well deserved thou fool!' But for the time being my error, if it be one, must sustain me. Is it not better that I satisfy my conscience though misguided, because not perfectly pure, than that I should listen to every voice, be it ever so friendly but by no means infallible?

"And who shall lose by erroneous fasting? Of course only myself. But I am public property, it is said. So be it. But I must be taken with all my faults. I am a searcher after truth. My experiments I hold to be infinitely more important than the best-equipped Himalayan expeditions. And the results? If the search is scientific, surely there is no comparison between the two. Let me, therefore, go my way. I shall lose my usefulness the moment I stifle the still small voice within.

"Well, this fast has nothing to do with the public. I am conducting a big institution called Satyagraha Ashram. Trusting friends have given me already over two lakhs of rupees for land and buildings alone. They are paying for its annual upkeep not less than eighteen thousand rupees per year. They do so in the hope that I am building up character. There are grown-up men and women in the ashram. There are boys and girls. The latter are trained to remain unmarried as long as possible. At no place within my knowledge do women enjoy so much freedom as at the ashram. It is my best and only creation. The world will judge me by its results. No man or woman, no boy or girl can live there, if I do not want them.

I believe that it contains some of the purest characters we have in India. If I am to deserve the implicit trust of friends who support it, I must be doubly vigilant, since they will neither examine the accounts nor the activity of the ashram. I discovered errors among the boys and somewhat among the girls. I know that hardly a school or any institution is free from the errors I am referring to. I am anxious to see the ashram free from errors which are sapping the manhood of the nation and undermining the character of the youth. It was not permissible to punish the boys. Experience gained in two schools under my control has taught me that punishment does not purify, if anything it hardens children. In such cases in South Africa I have resorted to fasts with, in my opinion, the best of results. I have resorted to the same process here and let me say of a milder type. The basis of the action is mutual love. I know that I possess the love of the boys and the girls. I know too that if the giving up of my life can make them spotless, it would be my supreme joy to give it. Therefore, I could do no less to bring the youngsters to a sense of their error. So far the results seem to be promising.

"What, however, if I cannot perceive the fruit? I can but do the will of God as I feel it. The result is in His disposing. This suffering for things great and small is the keynote of satyagraha."

Describing the technique of his fast in detail, Gandhi wrote:

"During the last year's fast, as during this year, but unlike the previous fast, I took water with salt and bicarbonate of soda added to it. Somehow or other I develop during fasts a distaste for water. With the addition of salt and soda it becomes somewhat bearable. I found that drinking copious draughts of water kept the system clean and the mouth moist. To every six to eight ounces of water five grains of salt and an equal quantity of soda were added; I drank during the day from forty to forty-eight ounces of water, in six to eight doses. I took also regularly every day an enema containing nearly three quarters of a pint of water with nearly forty grains of salt and an equal quantity of soda dissolved in it. The water was always warm. I had also a sponge-bath every day given to me in bed. I had both during last year's and this year's fast refreshing sleep at night and at least an hour during the day time. For three days and a half during the last fast, I worked practically from four in the morning till eight in the evening, holding discussions on the question that had entailed the fast, and attending to my

correspondence and editing. On the fourth day I developed a violent headache and the strain was proving unbearable. In the afternoon of the fourth day I stopped all work. The following day, I felt recuperated, the feeling of exhaustion was gone, headache had almost subsided. On the sixth day I felt fresher still and on the seventh day which was also my silent day I felt so fresh and strong that I was able to write with a steady hand my article on the fast.

"I am not aware during the whole of the fast of having suffered any pangs of hunger. Indeed, on the day of breaking the fast I was in no hurry, I broke it half an hour later than I need have. There was no difficulty during the fast about spinning. I was able to sit up every day for over half an hour, with a pillow to support the back, and spin almost with my usual speed. Nor did I have to miss any of the three daily prayer meetings. During the last four days I had to be carried on a cot to these meetings. With an effort I could even have sat up at the meeting, but I thought it better to conserve my energy. I am not conscious of having suffered much physical pain. The only pain which the memory has stored is a feeling of nausea, creeping over me now and then, which was as a rule overcome by sipping water.

"I broke the fast on orange juice and grape juice, about six ounces altogether, and I sucked the pulp of an orange. I repeated the performance two hours after, adding ten grapes, which were slowly sucked, leaving out all the skin. Later in the day after the enema, I had six ounces of goat's milk with two ounces of water, followed by an orange and ten grapes. Milk and water again in the evening, and fruit. The next day the quantity of milk was raised to eighteen ounces, water always added, and thus I continued to increase the quantity of milk by six ounces every day, till I reached forty-eight ounces. Milk is still diluted with water, though now one ounce of water is added to each portion. For one day and a half I tried undiluted milk, but I noticed a certain heaviness, which I attribute to undiluted milk and have, therefore, gone back to diluting it.

"At the time of writing these notes it is the twelfth day after the breaking of the fast. I have not yet taken solid food. Part of the fruit is still turned into juice and during the past three days I have added to grapes and oranges either papaw or pomegranate and *chiku.* The largest quantity of milk I have taken is sixty-four ounces. The average is forty-eight ounces. I add at times baker's bread or

home-made light *chapati*. But for months together I have been living on milk and fruit and keeping myself in a fit condition.

"My highest weight since my discharge from the prison has been 112 lb. The weight lost during the seven days of fast was 9 lb. I have now regained the whole of that weight and am now weighing a little over 103 lb. For the last three days, I have taken regular exercise, both in the morning and evening, without the slightest fatigue. There is no difficulty in walking on level ground. There is still some strain felt in ascending or descending steps. The bowels move fairly regularly, and I sleep almost to order.

"My opinion is that I have lost physically nothing as a result either of the twenty-one days' fast or this the latest seven days' fast. The loss of weight during the seven days' fast was no doubt somewhat alarming, but it was clearly due to the severe strain that was put upon the constitution during the first three and a half days. A little more rest, and I should regain my original vitality with which I started my fast and probably regain without difficulty the weight and strength lost in Cutch.

"From a layman's and from a purely physical standpoint I should lay down the following rules for all those who may wish to fast on any account whatsoever:

"1. Conserve your energy both physical and mental from the very beginning.

"2. You must cease to think of food whilst you are fasting.

"3. Drink as much cold water as you can, with or without soda and salt, but in small quantities at a time—water should be boiled, strained and cooled. Do not be afraid of salt and soda, because most waters contain both these salts in a free state.

"4. Have a warm sponge daily.

"5. Take an enema regularly during fast. You will be surprised at the impurities you will expel daily.

"6. Sleep as much as possible in the open air.

"7. Bathe in the morning sun. A sun and air bath is at least as great a purifier as a water bath.

"8. Think of anything else but the fast.

"9. No matter from what motive you are fasting, during this precious time, think of your Maker, and of your relation to Him and His other creation, and you will make discoveries you may not have even dreamed of.

"With apologies to medical friends, but out of the fulness of my own experience and that of fellow cranks I say without hesitation, fast (1) if you are constipated, (2) if you are anaemic, (3) if you are feverish, (4) if you have an indigestion, (5) if you have a headache, (6) if you are rheumatic, (7) if you are gouty, (8) if you are fretting and foaming, (9) if you are depressed, (10) if you are overjoyed; and you will avoid medical prescriptions and patent medicines.

"Eat only when you are hungry and when you have laboured for your food."

First public function that Gandhi attended after the fast was the Gujarat Vidyapith convocation on December 5. There was another function on the same day—the Vidyalaya social—where also he presided. His message was: "Remember that God is described as the Holder of the threads of the universe. There is a world of meaning in that pregnant description. Would you not draw the thread in His name and for the poor of your land?"

In spite of weakness he fulfilled engagements, though he spoke little. Before visiting Cawnpore for the Congress session he went to Dohad and Bombay to attend public functions. He said: "I have given my message. You cannot have a new or fresh message from me. Carry out that message and let me know the results."

Gandhi hailed the forthcoming session of the Congress as a true landmark in its history. It was he who had brought women on the political front and it was a triumph for him that Mrs. Naidu, who worked with him for ten years, was to preside over the Congress session: "An Indian woman will for the first time enjoy the highest honour in the gift of the nation. Despised we may be. Slaves we may be. Helpless we may be. The world may, if it chooses, think nothing of the national assembly. But for us a president of our assembly must be all in all. That unique honour will be hers this year as a matter of right."

The annual session of the Congress commenced on December 26 at Cawnpore. Gandhi who spoke only for five minutes said that on reviewing his five years' work, he had not one item to retrace or one statement to withdraw. "Today I would commence civil disobedience, if I thought that the fire and fervour are there in the people. But alas! they are not. The South African question is considered by many to be a suitable question, but I shall be overpowered by numbers that I may not care for."

In her presidential address, Mrs. Naidu summarized the struggles and aspirations of the people in whose name she spoke. She sketched no policy and it was left by design to Motilal Nehru. Her address, the shortest yet delivered by any President of the Congress, was a prose-poem.

The Congress confirmed the decisions taken at the Patna session of the A.-I.C.C.: "This Congress reiterates its full faith in civil disobedience as the only effective weapon to be used in the last resort to enforce the national claim and to vindicate our national honour, but realizes that the country is not ready for it and in view thereof, this Congress resolves that the guiding-principle in carrying on political work shall be self-reliance in all activities which make for the healthy growth of the nation and resistance to every activity, governmental or other, that may impede nation's progress towards swaraj."

The main flank of the Congress policy remained the constructive programme of Gandhi:

"The work in the country shall be directed to the education of the people in their political rights and training them to acquire the necessary strength and power of resistance to win those rights by carrying out the constructive programme of the Congress, with special reference to popularizing the spinning wheel and khaddar, promoting inter-communal unity and removal of untouchability, ameliorating the conditions of the suppressed classes and removal of the drink and drug evil, and shall include the capture of local bodies, the organization of villages, the promotion of education on national lines, the organization of labour—both industrial and agricultural—the adjustment of relations between the employers and workmen, between landlords and tenants, and the general advancement of national, economical, industrial and commercial interests of the country."

On the second day of the session, Motilal Nehru moved the main resolution outlining the political programme which proposed that failing a satisfactory response from the Government to the Central Assembly's resolution of February 1924, Swarajists should leave their seats in the legislatures and not attend meetings except to prevent seats being declared vacant. A special committee of the party would call a meeting of the A.-I.C.C. and frame a scheme of work to be carried out by the Congress and the Swaraj Party

organizations throughout the country, including the education of the people regarding elections, mass civil disobedience, and other matters. Gandhi entirely abstained from taking part during the debate. An amendment to Motilal Nehru's resolution was moved by Pandit Malaviya, who was supported by Jayakar. This amendment proposed considerable changes and omitted the part referring to civil disobedience. There was a tussle in which Nehru succeeded. As for his seat on the Skeen Committee, Nehru explained that the assembly had asked for an Indian Sandhurst and the Government had said, "Show the way." What they wanted was negotiation to show the Government the way to meet their demands, and if in the same way, the Government asked the Swarajists to show the way to reforms, they would certainly co-operate. Motilal Nehru's policy went against the grain of Jayakar, Kelkar and Dr. Moonje and they resigned on the spot from the assembly to which they were elected on Swaraj Party's ticket. They wanted to educate the electorate on responsive co-operation.

At Cawnpore, Hindustani was recommended as the language in which proceedings of the Congress should ordinarily be conducted and the A.-I.C.C. was authorized to open a foreign department under it to look after the interests of Indians abroad. There was a South African deputation in India at the time to which the Congress extended its welcome. The Congress condemned the proposed bill which was a breach of the Smuts-Gandhi settlement of 1914.

A session of the Hindu Mahasabha was held in the Congress pandal on December 29 and a large number of people heard Lala Lajpat Rai and Malaviya. Kelkar who presided over the session emphasized that the cultural regeneration of Hindu society was the main object of the Mahasabha. Mrs. Naidu said that swaraj was not possible so long as there was division among Hindus and untouchability was not removed. The All-India Khilafat Conference which was also held at Cawnpore was presided over by Maulana Azad. Prominent among those present were the Ali brothers, Hasrat Mohani, Gandhi and Mrs. Naidu. Maulana Azad, in his extempore address, dwelt on the necessity of continuing and strengthening the Khilafat organization: "The Indian Muslims are a hopelessly divided and disorganized people. India's independence cannot long be withheld now but our shameful indifference to our duties and our disregard of the most fundamental political demands might

postpone it and the responsibility is great, if we feel that we are retarding the progress of a people advancing towards swaraj."

The All-India Muslim League held its session at Aligarh on December 30. Among those present were Sir Mian Mahomed Shafi, Jinnah, the Ali brothers, Dr. Kitchlew and Asaf Ali. The League passed a resolution about self-government with many provisions to protect the Muslim interests. Jinnah in his speech hit hard at the Swaraj Party which he said was the party of sheer obstruction and civil disobedience.

Sir Moropant Joshi, presiding over a conference of the Liberal Federation held at Calcutta on December 31, said:

"The Liberals realize that all are working for a common objective. Circumstances which drive men like Mahatma Gandhi, Das and Nehru into a mentality that spurns co-operation and advises rigid obstruction are certainly unfortunate and deplorable, and the Government responsible for them must reconsider its attitude. From our national point of view, the union of all political parties is extremely desirable at this juncture. This must be realized by all, and it should not be impossible for all parties to unite by means of give and take. The Congress can then concentrate its attention on intensive propaganda with a resulting pressure on Government."

## *Year Of Silence*

1926

GANDHI took no part in the debate on the political resolution, at Cawnpore, thus signifying his withdrawal from an active share in politics. On the front page of the first issue of *Young India* of 1926 he announced the suspension of his touring activities for a year: "At least upto December 20 next, I am not to stir out of the ashram, certainly not out of Ahmedabad, except for imperative reasons of health or some unseen event." This decision was arrived at after consultation with principal colleagues at the Cawnpore Congress. The reasons for the decision were: First, to give his tired limbs as much rest as possible; Dr. Ansari had sent elaborate instructions forbidding even all avoidable mental toil. Second, to enable him to give personal attention to the Sabarmati ashram; he had not been able to attend to it personally except in 1915 when it was founded. Third, to enable him to put the affairs of the newly formed All-India Spinners' Association on a sound business-like basis.

He stuck to his programme and kept in touch with the country only through his journal. *Young India* featured one chapter a week from his autobiography creating world-wide interest. The story of his life was freely reproduced in almost all the Indian papers. "Writings in the journals which I have the privilege of editing must be common property," he replied to a friendly adviser. "Copyright is not a natural thing. It is a modern institution, perhaps desirable to a certain extent. But I have no wish to inflate the circulation of *Young India* or *Navajivan* by forbidding newspapers to copy the chapters of the autobiography." But he did not permit the greedy publishers to print the autobiography in book form: "I have myself no idea when the story will be completed, and I would not like the chapters to be published in parts, and without undergoing a revision by me or under my direction." *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* continued for three years and it appeared in book

form in two volumes, the first in 1927 and the second in 1929. The English translation from the original Gujarati was rendered mainly by Mahadev Desai and partly by Pyarelal, under the supervision of Gandhi and with the occasional guidance of Sastri and Miss Slade alias Mirabehn. The autobiography closed with a chapter on the Nagpur Congress, where he made a definite beginning in Indian politics. "My life from this point onward has been so public, that there is hardly anything about it that the people do not know," he wrote in concluding the series. A companion volume to the autobiography, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, was published in 1928. It was written from memory partly in Yeravda jail and partly outside after his premature release.

The autobiography evoked candid discussion, and many correspondents flooded him with questions. "I am being inundated with letters on brahmacharya and the means to its attainment," wrote Gandhi. "Let me repeat in different language what I have said or written on previous occasions." He practised brahmacharya since 1906 and recommended it to others not only for spiritual reasons but for the sake of selfless public work. When he realized that India's basic need was birth control, he adopted not the methods of the West but the traditional Indian practice of brahmacharya. In 1920, on the eve of the mass movement, he wrote:

"We have more than an ordinary share of disease, famines and pauperism—even starvation among the millions. We only multiply slaves and weaklings, if we continue the process of procreation whilst we feel and remain helpless, diseased and famine-stricken. Not till India has become a free nation, able to withstand avoidable starvation, well able to feed herself in times of famine, possessing the knowledge to deal with malaria, cholera, influenza and other epidemics have we right to bring forth progeny. I must not conceal from the reader the sorrow I feel when I hear of births in India. I must confess that for years I have contemplated with satisfaction the prospect of suspending procreation by voluntary self-denial. India is today ill-equipped for taking care of her population, not because she is over-populated but because she is forced into foreign domination whose creed is progressive exploitation of her resources."

According to Gandhi, birth control was not a remedy but self-restraint: "How is suspension of procreation to be brought about? Not by immoral and artificial checks that are resorted to in Europe,

but by a life of discipline and self-control. Parents must teach their children the practice of brahmacharya. According to the Hindu shastras the lowest age at which boys may marry is twenty-five. If the mothers of India could be inclined to believe that it is sinful to train boys and girls for a married life, half the marriages of India will automatically stop. Nor need we believe the fetish of early puberty among girls because of our hot climate. What does bring about untimely puberty is the mental and moral atmosphere surrounding our family life. Mothers and other relatives make it a religious duty to teach innocent children that they are to be married when they reach a particular age. They are betrothed when they are infants, or even babes in arms. The dress and the food of the children are also aids to stimulating passions. We dress our children like dolls, not for their but our pleasure and vanity. We provide them with all kinds of heating and stimulating foods. The result undoubtedly is an early adolescence, immature progeny and an early grave. The parents furnish an object-lesson which the children easily grasp. By reckless indulgence in their passions, they serve for their children as models of unrestrained licence. Every untimely addition to the family is ushered in amidst trumpets of joy and feasting. The wonder is that we are not less restrained than we are, notwithstanding our surroundings. I have not a shadow of doubt that married people, if they wished well to the country and wanted to see India become a nation of strong and handsome full-formed men and women, would practise perfect self-restraint and cease to procreate for the time being."

Even in his own case he confessed that perfect brahmacharya was difficult to achieve: "It is an ideal state which is rarely realized. It is almost like Euclid's line which exists only in imagination, never capable of being physically drawn. It is nevertheless an important definition in geometry yielding great result. So may a perfect brahmachari exist only in imagination. But if we did not keep him constantly before our mind's eye, we should be like a rudderless ship. The nearer the approach to the imaginary state, the greater the perfection."

His own experience in brahmacharya being fairly extensive he was desirous of placing some of its results before the reader:

"The mind takes a rope to be a snake, and the man with that mentality turns pale and runs away, or takes up a stick to belabour

the fancied snake. Another mistakes a sister for wife and has animal passion rising in his breast. The passion subsides the moment he discovers his mistake. . .

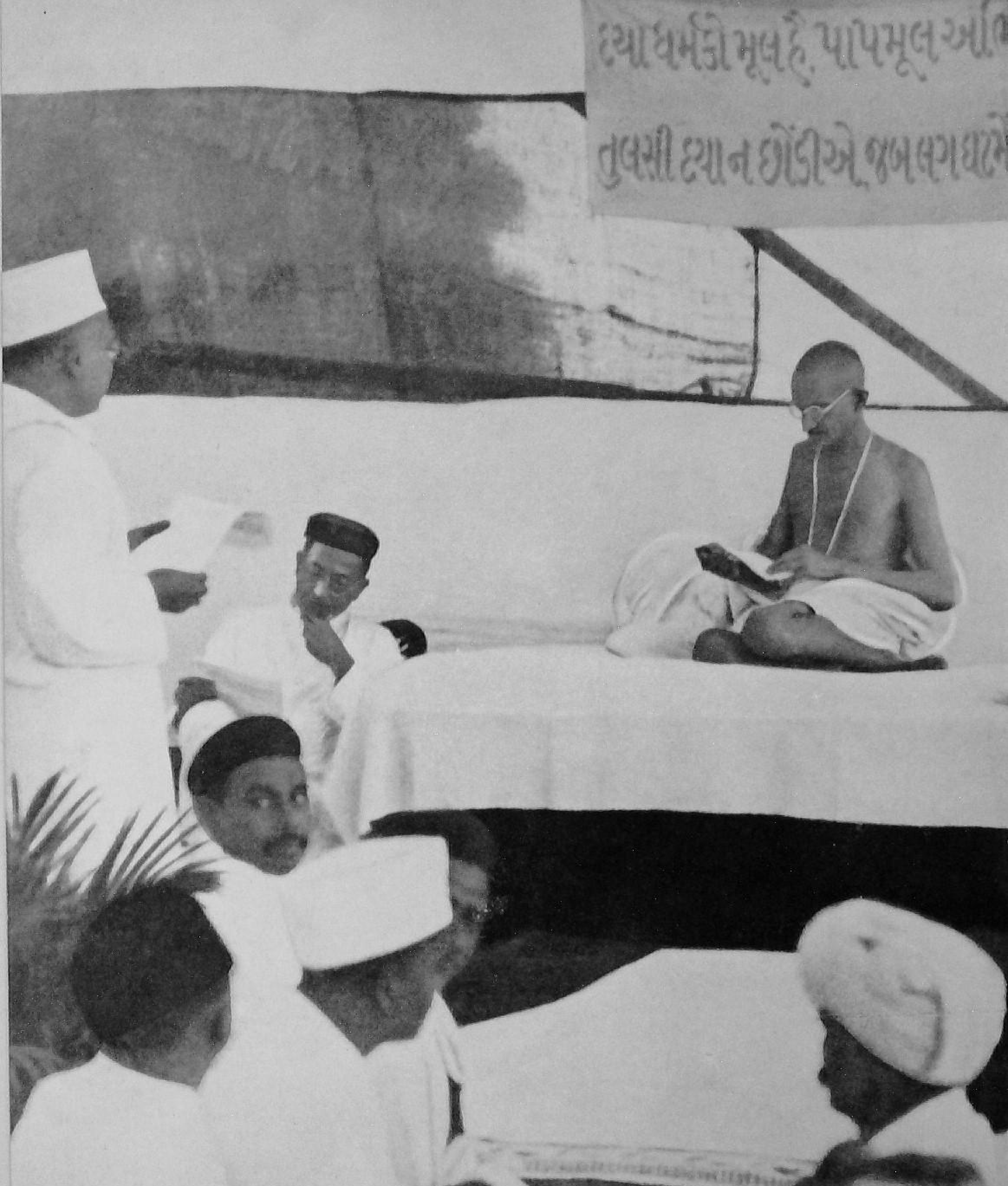
"No doubt, whilst 'abstinence is practised under the false idea that the instinct is but a low pleasure,' it is likely 'to produce irritability and the weakening of love'. But if abstinence is practised with the desire to strengthen the bond of love, to purify it, to conserve the vital energy for a better purpose, instead of promoting irritability it will promote equanimity, instead of loosening the bond of affection, strengthen it. Love based upon indulgence of animal passion is at best a selfish affair, likely to snap under the slightest strain. And why should the sexual act be a sacrament in the human species, if it is not that among the lower animals? Why should we not look at it as what it is in reality, a simple act of procreation to which we are helplessly drawn for the perpetuation of the species? Only a man, having been gifted with a free will to a limited extent, exercises the human prerogative of self-denial for the sake of the nobler purpose to which he is born than his brother animals. It is the force of habit which makes us think the sexual act to be necessary and desirable for the promotion of love, apart from procreation, in spite of innumerable experiences to the contrary that it does not deepen love, that it is in no way necessary for its retention or enrichment. Instances can be quoted in which that bond has grown stronger with abstinence. No doubt abstinence must be a voluntary act undertaken for mutual moral advancement.

"Human society is a ceaseless growth, an unfoldment in terms of spirituality. If so, it must be based on ever-increasing restraint upon the demands of the flesh. Thus marriage must be considered to be a sacrament imposing discipline upon the partners, restricting them to the physical union only among themselves for the purpose of procreation when both the partners desire and are prepared for it.

"There is an end to all argument if we start, as my correspondent has done, with the premise that sexual act is a necessity outside of the purpose of procreation. The premise is vitiated in the presence of authentic instances that can be cited of complete abstinence having been practised by some of the highest among mankind in all climes. It is no argument against the possibility or desirability of abstinence to say that it is difficult for the vast majority of mankind. What was not possible for the vast majority a hundred years ago has

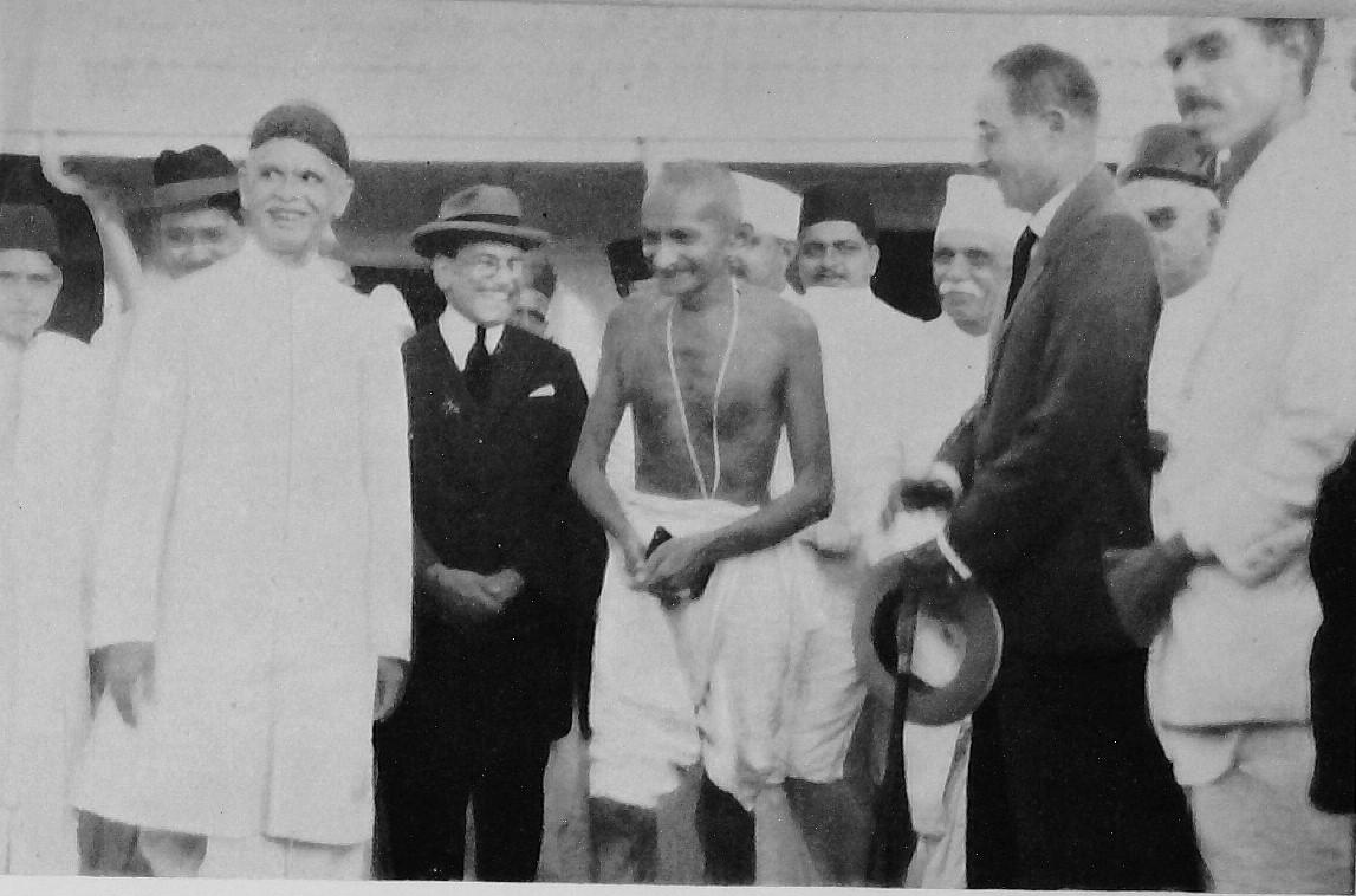
From Sumati Morarjee Collection

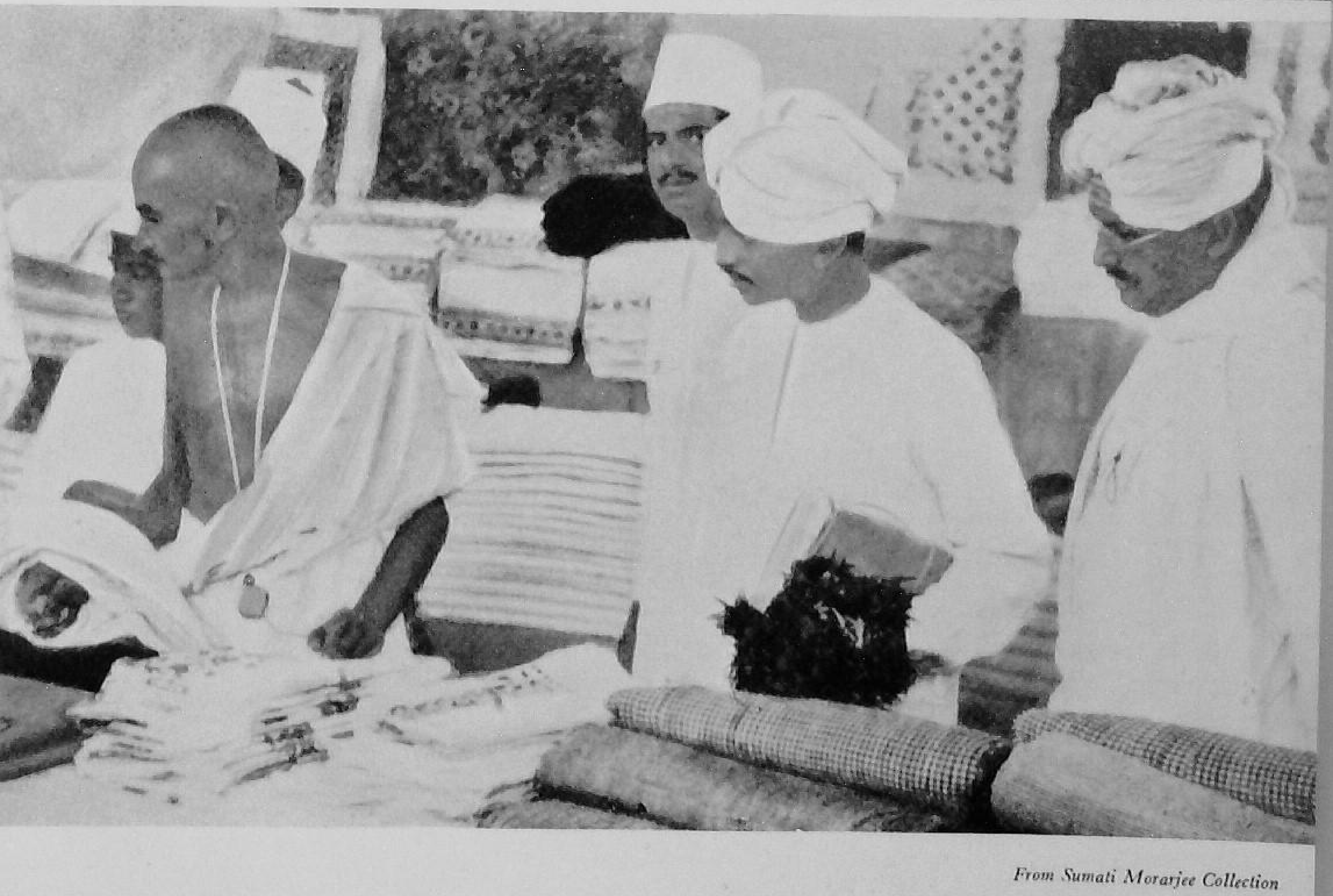
Gandhi, 1926




*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi at a *goraksha* meeting, Bombay, 1926

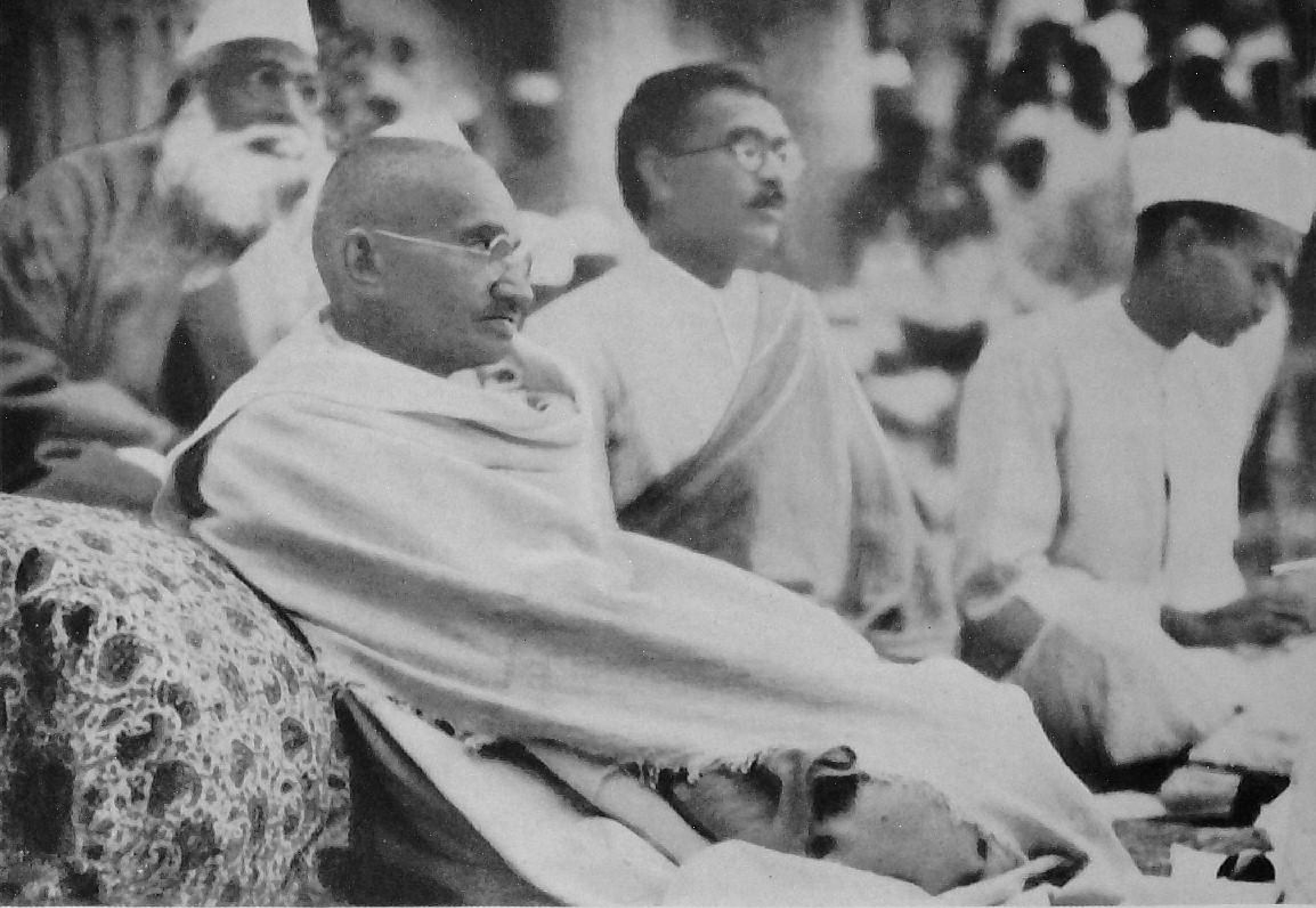


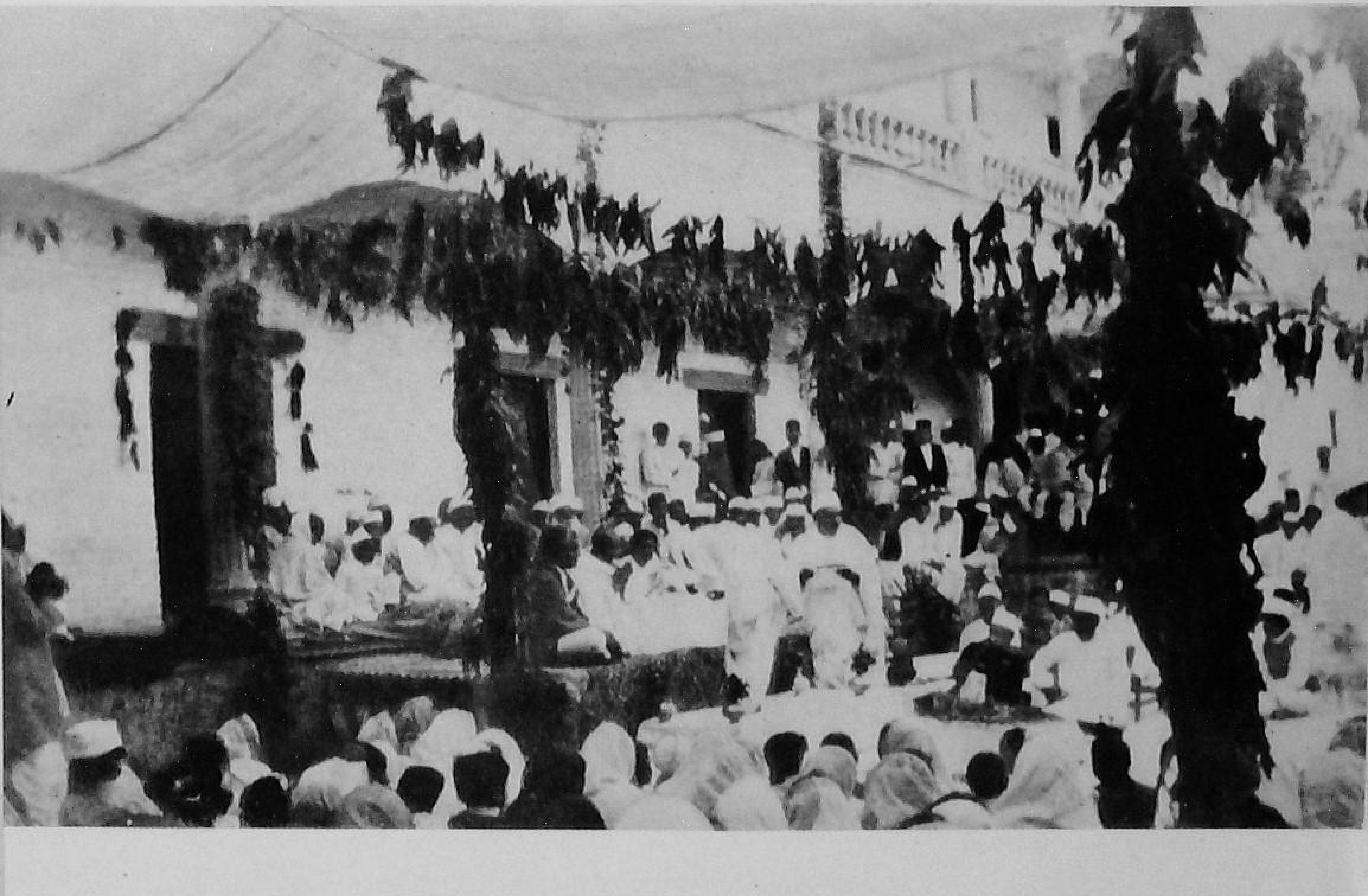


*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi at a garden party given to the South African delegation, Bombay, September 19, 1926

Visit to a Khadi exhibition, 1926





Gandhi as Chancellor of the Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad, November 28, 1926 *Photograph : R. M. Raval*

Conferring degrees on the Vidyapith students *Courtesy : Naginbhai Shah*

been found possible today. What is a hundred years in the cycle of time open to us for making infinite progress? If scientists are right, it was but yesterday that we found ourselves endowed with the human body. Who knows, who dare prescribe, its limitation? Every day we are discovering the infiniteness of its capacity for good as well as evil.

"If the possibility and desirability of abstinence be admitted, we must find out and devise the means of attaining it. Life must be remodelled, if we are to live under restraint upon the organs of procreation, we must impose it upon all the others. If the eye and the ear and the nose and the tongue, the hands and the feet are let loose, it is impossible to keep the primary organ under check. Most cases of irritability, hysteria, and even insanity will in truth be found traceable to the incontinence of the other senses. No sin, no breach of nature's laws, goes unpunished.

"I must not quarrel about words. If self-control be an interference with nature precisely in the same sense as contraceptives, be it so. I would still maintain that the one interference is lawful and desirable because it promotes the well-being of the individuals as well as society, whereas the other degrades both and is, therefore, unlawful. Self-control is the surest and the only method of regulating the birth-rate. Birth control by contraceptives is race suicide."

In a nutshell, his central teachings on brahmacharya were:

"Human society is a ceaseless growth, an unfolding in terms of spirituality; that though there is nothing to be ashamed of in the sex urge it is meant only for the act of creation; that while absolute brahmacharya, or control of all the senses at all times and at all places in thought, word and deed, is a consummation devoutly to be wished, if one dare not think of it, one might marry by all means but even then one must live a life of self-restraint; that marriage must be considered as a sacrament imposing strict discipline upon the partners, restricting them to the physical union only among themselves and for the purpose only of procreation when both the partners desire and are prepared for it; that the observance of the law of continence is impossible without a living faith in God which is living Truth; that woman must cease to consider herself the object of man's lust or plaything if she has to fulfil her destiny; that self-control is the surest and the only method of regulating the birth-rate and birth control by contraceptives is both immoral

and suicidal; and that a large part of the miseries of today can be avoided if we look at the relations between the sexes in a healthy and pure light and regard ourselves as the trustees for the moral welfare of our future generations."

Gandhi's views on sex were criticized by many as ultra conservative. His condemnation of early marriages was not liked by the orthodox people. His plea for widow marriage was not palatable to some reformers. "Widow marriage is no sin—if it be—it is as much a sin as the marriage of a widower is," he said.

"We cry for cow protection in the name of religion, but we refuse protection to the human cow in the shape of the girl widow. We would resent to force in religion. But in the name of religion we force widowhood upon our three lakhs of girl widows who could not understand the import of the marriage ceremony. To coerce widowhood upon little girls is a brutal crime for which we Hindus are daily paying dearly. If our conscience was truly awakened there would be no marriage before fifteen, let alone widowhood, and we would declare that these three lakhs of girls were never religiously married. There is no warrant in any shastra for such widowhood. Voluntary widowhood consciously adopted by a woman who has felt the affection of a partner, adds grace and dignity to life, sanctifies the home and uplifts religion itself. Widowhood imposed by religion or custom is an unbearable yoke and defiles the home by secret vice and degrades religion.

"Does not this Hindu widowhood stink in one's nostrils when one thinks of old and diseased men over fifty taking or rather purchasing girl wives sometimes one on the top of another? So long as we have thousands of widows in our midst, we are sitting on a mine which may explode any moment. If we would be pure, if we would save Hinduism, we must rid ourselves of this poison of enforced widowhood. The reform must begin by those who have girl widows taking courage in both their hands and seeing that the child widows in their charge are duly and well married—not remarried. They were never really married."

Unlike pure reformers, he considered swaraj to be as important as social reform. "The fact is that political emancipation means the rise of mass consciousness. It cannot come without affecting all the branches of national activity. Every reform means awakening. Once truly awakened the nation will not be satisfied with reform

only in one department of life. All movements must, therefore, proceed, everyone proceeding simultaneously."

He asked the Swarajists to make total prohibition a prominent plank in the electoral campaign: "Every member must be pledged not merely to support but to initiate and pursue the prohibition campaign, the only way to bring about total prohibition being to cut from the military expenditure a portion equivalent to the revenue derived from this immoral source. The demand, therefore, for total prohibition must go hand in hand with the demand for reduction in the military expenditure. Nor must the solution be delayed by plans for taking referendums. In India there can be no reason for any referendum, because drink and drug habit are universally recognized as a vice. Drink is not a fashion in India as it is in the West. To talk, therefore, of a referendum in India is to trifle with the problem."

Gandhi's main concern was the charkha and as the founder of the All-India Spinners' Association he devoted much of his time to organize the khaddar activities. He kept himself in constant touch with far-flung khadi centres, collected facts and figures, got charts made and published the statistics in *Young India* from time to time. By the end of 1926, the association had on its record 110 carders, 42,959 spinners and 3,407 weavers, among whom were distributed over nine lakhs of rupees at the lowest computation. This distributing work was done at 150 production centres which catered to the needs of nearly 1,500 villages.

He gave a tremendous impetus to khaddar by giving it the most important place in the constructive programme. "Khaddar alone leads itself to mass demonstration," he wrote with regard to the National Week celebrations. He recommended intensive khaddar propaganda during the week starting on April 6: "What is that every one can do without much effort and which would increase the wealth of India, which increases the power of organization and makes us feel akin to one another? The answer unhesitatingly is the spinning wheel." The response was great. Charkha hummed everywhere and men, women and children participated in making the National Week a success. Motilal Nehru hawked khaddar in the streets of Allahabad. "Even in India, it must be recognized that Pandit Nehru is making an ass of himself," wrote *Times of India*. "The completeness of the Congress collapse, the utter futility of

the so-called Congress creed, and a total absence among Congress supporters of a single responsible political idea are well illustrated by a telegram from Allahabad." The paper described khaddar as grave-clothes. "If the *Times of India* at all represents British public opinion," remarked Gandhi, "khaddar is evidently producing the desired effect."

The wheel caught the imagination even of the school children. "It is Mahatmaji's order," they said. "It has got to be obeyed." They religiously worked every day and sent self-spun yarn to the A.-I.S.A. and some of them asked for his message. "A cause is often greater than man," wrote Gandhi. "Certainly the spinning wheel is greater than myself." He wanted the children to reason out the significance of charkha. "With it, in my opinion, is mixed up the well-being of the whole mass of Indian humanity. Pupils should, therefore, learn something about the deep poverty of the masses. They should have an ocular demonstration of some villages that are crumbling down to pieces. They should know the population of India. They should know the vast extent of this peninsula and they should know what it is that all the millions can do to add to their scanty resources. They should learn to identify themselves with the poor and the downtrodden in the land. They should be taught to deny themselves, so far as possible, things that the poorest cannot have. Then they will understand the virtue of spinning. It will then survive any shock including disillusionment about myself. The cause of the spinning wheel is too great and too good to have to rest on mere hero-worship. It lends itself to scientific economic treatment."

Addressing the students of the Gujarat Vidyapith, Gandhi said: "There are some 7,000 railway stations for the 700,000 villages of India. We do not even claim to know those 7,000 villages. We know only through history the condition of villages not within easy reach of railway stations. The only loving tie of service that can bind the villages to us is the spinning wheel. Those who have not understood this basic truth are in this institution to no purpose. The education is not 'national' that takes no count of the starving millions of India and that devises no means for their relief. Government contact with the villages ends with the collection of revenue. Our contact with them begins with their service through the spinning wheel, but it does not end there. The spinning wheel is the centre of that service.

If you spend your next vacation in some village in the interior, you will find the people cheerless and fear-stricken. You will find houses in ruins. You will look in vain for any sanitary or hygienic conditions. You will find the cattle in a miserable way, and you will see idleness stalking there. The people will tell you of the spinning wheel having been in their homes long ago, but today they will entertain no talk of it or of any other cottage industry. They have no hope left in them. They live, for they cannot die at will. They will spin only if you spin. Even if a hundred out of a population of 300 in a village spin, you assure them of an additional income of Rs. 1,800 a year. You can lay the foundation of solid reform on this income of every village. It is easy to say this, but difficult to do. Faith can make it easy. 'I am alone, how can I reach seven hundred thousand villages?' This is the argument that pride whispers to us. Start with the faith that if you fix yourself up in one single village and succeed, the rest will follow. Progress is then assured. The Vidyalaya wants to make you workers of that type. If it is a cheerless job, the Vidyalaya is indeed cheerless and fit to be deserted."

Gandhi gave personal attention to the inmates of Satyagraha Ashram and the students of the Gujarat Vidyapith. He read the Gita and the Ramayana of Tulsidas to the ashram inmates. The students of the Gujarat Vidyapith preferred to hear from him the interpretation of the New Testament. Some critics said that Gandhi was a Christian by conviction. "What is there specially in the Bible that is not to be found in our sacred books?" they asked. Gandhi replied:

"I hold that it is the duty of every cultured man or woman to read sympathetically the scriptures of the world. If we are to respect others' religions as we would have them to respect our own, a study of the world's religions is a sacred duty. We need not dread, upon our grown-up children, the influence of scriptures other than our own. We liberalize their outlook upon life by encouraging them to study freely all that is clean. Fear there would be when some one reads his own scriptures to young people with the intention secretly or openly of converting them. He must then be biased in favour of his own scriptures. For myself, I regard my study of and reverence for the Bible, the Koran, and all the other scriptures to be wholly consistent with my claim to be a staunch sanatani Hindu. He is no

sanatani Hindu who is bigoted, and considers evil to be good if it has the sanction of antiquity and is to be found supported in a Sanskrit book. I claim to be a staunch sanatani Hindu because, though I reject all that offends my moral sense, I find the Hindu scriptures to satisfy the needs of the soul. My respectful study of other religions has not abated my reverence for or my faith in the Hindu scriptures. They have indeed left their deep mark upon my understanding of the Hindu scriptures. They have broadened my view of life. They have enabled me to understand more clearly many an obscure passage in the Hindu scriptures.

"The charge of being a Christian in secret is not new. It is both a libel and a compliment—a libel because there are men who can believe me to be capable of being secretly anything, for fear of being that openly. There is nothing in the world that would keep me from professing Christianity or any other faith, the moment I felt the truth of and the need for it. Where there is fear there is no religion. The charge is a compliment in that it is a reluctant acknowledgement of my capacity for appreciating the beauties of Christianity. And if I could call myself, say, a Christian, or a Musalman, with my own interpretation of the Bible or the Koran I should not hesitate to call myself either. For then Hindu, Christian and Musalman would all be synonymous terms. I do believe that in the other world, there are neither Hindus, nor Christians nor Musalmans. There, all are judged not according to their labels or professions but according to their actions irrespective of their professions. During our earthly existence there will always be these labels. I, therefore, prefer to retain the label of my forefathers so long as it does not cramp my growth and does not debar me from assimilating all that is good anywhere else.

"The hypersensitiveness that my correspondents have betrayed is but an indication of the intensity of the wave of intoleration that is sweeping through this unhappy land. Let those who can, remain unmoved by it."

Outside his own institutions he rarely lectured during 1926. His speech in April at the annual function of the National Music Association in Ahmedabad was an exception. He wanted to see music introduced in unmusical Ahmedabad:

"There is a famous classical saying which has now become a proverb that the man 'that hath no music in himself' is either an

ascetic or a beast. We are far from being ascetics, and to the extent that we are devoid of music, we are near allied to beasts. To know music is to transfer it to life. The prevalent discord of today is an indication of our sad plight. There can be no swaraj, where there is no harmony, no music.

"Where there is discord and every one striking his own tune, there is bad government or anarchy. Work for swaraj fails to appeal to us because we have no music in us. When we have millions of people singing in harmony or taking God's name in unison, making one music, we shall have taken the first step to swaraj. If we cannot achieve this simple thing, how can we win swaraj?

"We have free music classes in Ahmedabad for the last three years conducted by one who is an expert. And yet we have to be satisfied with a roll attendance of ten and a regular attendance of four. It is poor consolation, but we live in hope. Where there is filth and squalor and misery, there can be no music. It implies an atmosphere quite the contrary. If we put a broad interpretation of music, if we mean by it union, concord, mutual help, it may be said that in no department of life can we dispense with it.

"Music today has been degraded to mean the vocal effort of a singing girl. We fight shy of sending our sisters and daughters to music schools. There seems to be a superstition that their voice is best when it is devoid of sweetness. Music, truly speaking, is a very ancient and sacred art. The hymns of Sama Veda are a mine of music, and no *ayat* of the Koran can be recited unmusically. David's Psalms transport you to raptures and remind you of the hymns from Sama Veda. Let us revive this art.

"We see Hindu and Musalman musicians sitting side by side and partaking in musical concerts. When shall we see the same fraternal union in other affairs of our life? We shall then have the name of Rama and Rahman simultaneously on our lips.

"I am glad some of you here are patronizing music. If many more send their children to the music class it will be part of their contribution to national uplift."

Gandhi did not stir out of Ahmedabad except on one occasion, when he went in May to see the Governor of Bombay at Mahabaleshwar. He was invited to discuss agricultural problems. He told the Governor that he could not be identified with the royal commission in any way, and he was still confirmed in his views on

non-co-operation and generally had no faith in any commissions. In the two interviews he had with the Governor, Gandhi talked on agriculture, the cattle problem and the charkha. On his return he was waylaid by the Congress workers. "How can you go to the Governor and call yourself a non-co-operator?" they asked. "Non-co-operators must instinctively know that I am not likely to do anything contrary to our code," replied Gandhi. "And if I do—I admit that I am liable to err—they must disown me and remain firm in their convictions."

Gandhi kept himself aloof from politics and made no comment on Indian affairs. His apparent inaction was "concentrated action" in reality: "I have ceased to meddle in Hindu-Muslim quarrels because my meddling at this juncture, I am convinced, can only do harm. Then there remain untouchability, national educational institutions and the spinning wheel. To these I am giving all the attention I am capable of giving." He remained silent on the squabbles that were going on among the council party. "The quarrel is purely domestic," he said. "If I have not interfered in the council matters, it is because I have no aptitude for them—certainly, I have no faith in council giving swaraj."

## *Council Front*

### 1926

WITH THE consent of Gandhi, political portfolio of the Congress was handed over to Motilal Nehru at Cawnpore. While Gandhi guided the constructive activities, the Swaraj Party leader led the political struggle in the councils. When the session of the Central Assembly began in January 1926, Lajpat Rai was elected to the assembly for the seat vacated for him by one of the Swarajists and although, as he said, he was not expressly elected on the Swarajist ticket he accepted the policy and programme of the party. This strengthened Motilal Nehru but the council front was not a bed of roses. On February 14 the dissentients met in a conference at Akola and formally formed the Responsivist Party with M. R. Jayakar as president. Motilal Nehru rushed to Sabarmati for urgent consultation with Gandhi.

On March 6 the A.-I.C.C. met at Delhi to decide the line of action. The committee appointed by the Cawnpore Congress recommended a walk-out from the councils: "This committee having considered the statements made by the Governor-General in his inaugural address to the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State is emphatically of opinion that the said statements amount to a refusal on the part of Government to concede the demand for reforms made by the assembly." The A.-I.C.C. passed the walk-out resolution after prolonged discussion. It called upon the Swarajist members "to leave their seats after raising the constitutional issue once again by moving on the 8th March that the first demand for grant which may come up for discussion be omitted". It also asked the Swarajist members of the legislatures to stage a walk-out on a fixed date. The A.-I.C.C. by another resolution resolved to prepare for the forthcoming general elections strictly on lines laid down by the Congress and to pursue the constructive programme chalked out by Gandhi.

On March 8, Nehru duly announced in the Legislative Assembly that the Swaraj Party was under a mandate to walk out over the issue of reforms: "We have on two previous occasions taken part in the discussion on the budget. We told the British Government that we refuse to be consenting parties to an administration which has been forced upon us against our will. We took the opportunity to convey a message to the people of the United Kingdom that, unless that system was changed according to the wishes of India, there would be no contentment in this country. That message has so far been absolutely unheeded, and the latest utterances of high and responsible members of the Government have shown the utter futility of any further action that can be taken in this house. We come here today under a definite mandate to deliver that message of the Indian National Congress to the Government. We feel that we have no further use for these sham institutions, and the least we can do to vindicate the honour and self-respect of the nation is to get out of them and go back to the country for work in the country. We will try to devise those sanctions which alone can compel any government to grant the demands of the nation."

After the Swarajist members walked out of the house in a body, Vithalbhai Patel, President of the Legislative Assembly, in adjourning the house till the next day, announced:

"The chair regrets the circumstances which have necessitated the largest party in the house to withdraw. . . The fact, however, remains that the house ceases to be representative, in the sense in which it was intended to be by the Government of India Act. There is absolutely no doubt that the assembly, as it is constituted now, is merely there to register the decrees of the executive Government. It cannot be anything else, and therefore, it is for the Government seriously to consider how long it should allow the house to function. But, so long as it is allowed to function, I would advise the Government to bring forward only such business as is absolutely necessary for the purpose of carrying on the administration and not to bring forward any controversial measures. The chair has a duty to see that the machinery of the Government of India Act is not abused to the prejudice of the people, and for that purpose the chair possesses sufficient powers in the shape of the adjournment of the house *sine die* or in the shape of refusing to put any motion to the house. I hope and trust that the

Government will so act in carrying on the business of the assembly hereafter, that the chair will not be compelled to resort to its extraordinary powers."

On March 13 the All-India Hindu Mahasabha held its session at Delhi and passed a resolution on council entry and authorized the Mahasabha that "it should take all proper steps which include running of its own candidates where necessary to safeguard Hindu interests." Among those present were Pandit Malaviya, Lajpat Rai, Swami Shraddhanand, Bhai Parmanand, Dr. Choithram, Jairamdas Daulatram, Jamnadas Mehta and Dr. Moonje. The Responsivists took a prominent part in its deliberations. Motilal Nehru submitted a note at this session in which he deprecated this departure in the policy of the Mahasabha and pointed out how it had no political programme of its own but brought "together under its banner political parties as wide apart as the poles".

The reaction to the Hindu Mahasabha's orientation was felt at the Khilafat Conference held at Delhi three months later. It was a representative gathering attended by the Ali brothers, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Azad. Maulana Suleman Nadvi, the president, stated that the Muslims in India did not mind *sangathan* but they were concerned about *shuddhi*. Maulana Mahomed Ali supported *tabligh* and said that it was the duty of every Muslim to convert non-Muslims to Islam. He prayed for the day when he would convert Gandhi to Islam. Shaukat Ali eulogized the Khilafatists for furthering the national cause in spite of the Hindus and he advised the Muslims that if the Hindus or any other community attacked them, they should pay back in the like manner. Maulana Azad remained aloof from the communal wrangling. Dr. Ansari announced that he ceased to be a member of the Muslim League, the Khilafat Committee or any other communal organization.

On April 3 the Responsivists joined hands with the Independents in Bombay and formed the Indian National Party to prepare "for the establishment of swaraj of the dominion type", by all peaceful and legitimate means with liberty to resort inside the legislature to responsive co-operation. Motilal Nehru regarded the formation of the new party as a challenge to the Swaraj Party and described it as a "conglomerate in the first stage of geological formation".

A meeting of the two wings of the Swaraj Party was held at Sabarmati on April 20. Gandhi, Mrs. Naidu, Motilal Nehru,

Lajpat Rai, Kelkar, Jayakar, Aney and Dr. Moonje participated in it. Here it was agreed that "the response made by Government to the Swarajists' demand of February 1924 in the assembly should be considered satisfactory if, in the provinces, the power, responsibility and initiative necessary for the effective discharge of their duties are secured to ministers."

The Sabarmati pact evoked protests from staunch Congressmen. It was generally thought that the Swarajists would "walk in" and form ministries. Motilal Nehru promptly cleared the atmosphere. He said that three conditions had to be satisfied before office could be accepted. First, the ministers should be made fully responsible to the legislatures, free from all control of government; second, that an adequate proportion of the revenues be allotted for the development of nation-building departments; third, that ministers be given full control of the services in the transferred departments.

Jayakar characterized Nehru's announcement as a travesty of the pact and a complete repudiation of it. When the A.-I.C.C. met at Ahmedabad on May 4 to ratify the Sabarmati pact the Responsivists were conspicuous by their absence. Motilal Nehru, speaking on the failure of negotiations with the Responsivists, said that the pact was apparently signed by each group under certain impressions entirely different from those of the other. While the Responsivists supported the pact on a certain understanding that the reforms should be worked for all they were worth, Nehru was prepared to co-operate only if the Government conceded the conditions laid down by Das in his Faridpur speech. The Sabarmati pact, therefore, was declared to have lapsed.

On May 7 a meeting of the dissentients was held at Bombay under the presidentship of Jayakar. Among the prominent people present were Kelkar, Aney, Dr. Moonje, Bhopatkar, Mrs. Besant and Jamnadas Dwarkadas. The Responsivists decided to allow its members to join the Indian National Party and co-operate with it at every stage. Fissiparous tendencies were evident in all the provinces and consequently the Swaraj Party suffered. On August 7 Lajpat Rai resigned from the Swaraj Party and he helped Malaviya to form a new party, the Independent Congress Party, to oppose the Swaraj Party. The new party represented a more moderate outlook and was definitely more to the right than the Swaraj Party. It was also wholly a Hindu party working in close co-operation

with the Hindu Mahasabha. During the election campaign Lala Lajpat Rai went to the extent of accusing the Swarajist leaders and particularly Nehru of intriguing with Kabul. It was a disheartening affair but Gandhi could not be persuaded to smoothen the differences as he considered them natural under the prevailing conditions. He wrote:

"Even the ugly duel between Motilalji and Lalaji is part of the same struggle. Let the enemies of India's freedom gloat over their differences. These patriots will be working under the same flag long before the gloating is over. They are both lovers of their country. Lalaji sees no escape from communalism. Panditji cannot brook even the thought of it. Who shall say that only one is right? Both attitudes are a response to the prevailing atmosphere. Lalaji who was born to public life with swaraj on his lips is no hater of it now. He proposes to mount to it through communalism which he considers to be an inevitable stage in our evolution. Motilalji thinks that communalism blocks the way, he proposes to ignore it even as auto-suggestionists ignore disease seeing that health, not 'illth', is the law of life. The nation can ill afford to do without Sir Abdur Rahim as without Hakim Ajmal Khan. Sir Abdur Rahim, who wrote the weighty minute with Gokhale on the Islington Commission, is no enemy of his country. Who shall blame him if he thinks that the country cannot progress without the Muslims competing with the Hindus on equal terms? He may be wrong in his methods. But he is nonetheless a lover of freedom. Whilst, therefore, I can make room in my mind for all these various schools of thought, for me there is only one way. I have no faith in communalism even as a stage, better still, I have no fitness for work on that stage. I must hold myself in reserve till the storm is over and the work of rebuilding has commenced.

"I can but watch from a safe distance the struggle that goes on in the councils. I honour those who have faith in them for prosecuting the programme with zeal.

"It is educated India which is split up into parties. I confess my incompetence to bring these parties together. Their method is not my method. I am trying to work from bottom upward. To an onlooker it is exasperatingly slow work. They are working from top downward—a process much more difficult and complicated than the former."

Though the council programme was in vogue, the Swarajists looked to Gandhi's work with intense sympathy. Vithalbhai Patel sent a note to Gandhi on May 10, 1926 which was withheld for a year at his express wish. Vithalbhai felt it delicate to make the announcement whilst the elections were pending. In his letter, Vithalbhai wrote:

"When I accepted the office of President of the Legislative Assembly I had made a resolve within myself that I would devote the savings from my salary towards the furtherance of some object calculated to promote the national welfare. It was not possible for me, for various reasons, to save anything worth the name within the first six months. Since the last month, I am glad to say that I am quite out of the wood and can and do save a substantial amount. I find, that on an average, I require Rs. 2,000 per month for my expenses. The amount of my next salary excluding income-tax is Rs. 3,625. I propose, therefore, to set apart Rs. 1,625 per month, beginning from the last month, to be utilized hereafter in such manner and for such purpose as you may approve. I enclose herewith a cheque for Rs. 1,625 from my salary for the month of April. I trust that you will not decline to take this responsibility."

General elections took place in November. The Swaraj Party suffered because of the growth of communalism. Some Muslim members dropped off and joined the communal organizations, and some Hindu members joined the Nationalist Party. Lala Lajpat Rai and Pandit Malaviya made a very powerful combination so far as the Hindu electorate was concerned. On the side of the Swaraj Party or the Congress, the chief burden of fighting the elections fell on Motilal Nehru. The growing strength of the opposition made Motilal Nehru throw all his energy into the election campaign. The Nationalist Party, however, met with a great measure of success. Not a single Hindu or Muslim seat for the assembly could be captured by the Punjab Swarajists. Lajpat Rai was returned with overwhelming majority. In U.P., excepting Motilal Nehru whose election was not contested, not a single Swarajist was elected. In C.P. the Swarajists secured only one seat. The Swarajists were routed and the Responsivists had a walk over in all the provinces except in Madras. Analysing the defeat Nehru wrote:

"It was a fight between the forces of nationalism and those of a low order of communalism reinforced by corruption, terrorism,

wealth and falsehood. 'Religion in danger' was the cry of the opponents of the Congress, both Hindu and Muslim. I have been denounced as a beef-eater and destroyer of cows, the supporter of the prohibition of music before mosques, and the one man responsible for the stoppage of Ramalila processions in Allahabad. I could only contradict these lies in the public meetings, but they penetrated hamlets and villages which I could not reach. Staying in dak and inspection bungalows, and eating food cooked in the European style, was taken to confirm the lying propaganda."

The appeal to communal sentiment during the election campaign left a trail of bitter memories. The formation of purely communal ministries in more provinces than one and the efforts in working the reforms through Muslim ministries supported by the official and nominated block had roused the fears of the Hindus, especially in the Punjab, in Bengal and in Bombay. The Hindus resorted to *shuddhi* and *sangathan*, and the Muslims competed with them. The communal differences deepened and led to much bloodshed. There were fierce riots in Calcutta and several minor riots elsewhere. The depression in trade and the acute unemployment contributed to bitter feeling between the two major communities. Religious festivals became occasions of strife and extreme anxiety instead of rejoicing. The atmosphere was charged everywhere with uncertainty and animosity.

There were thirty-five Hindu-Muslim riots during the year but Gandhi did not share the pessimism prevailing in the country:

"Hindu-Muslim quarrels are, in a way unknown to us, a fight for swaraj. Each party is conscious of its impending coming. Each wants to be found ready and fit for swaraj when it comes. Hindus think they are physically weaker than Muslims. The latter consider themselves to be weak in educational and earthly equipment. They are doing what all weak bodies have done hitherto. This fighting, however unfortunate it may be, is a sign of growth. It is like the War of the Roses. Out of it will rise a mighty nation. A better than the bloody way was opened out to us in 1920, but we could not assimilate it. But even a bloody way is better than utter helplessness and unmanliness."

On December 20, Gandhi broke his "silence" and his active tour commenced—Amraoti, Nagpur and Gondia being the places visited on his way to the Gauhati Congress. In his speeches the old

programme was reiterated with greater faith and fervour. He said at Gondia: "How can you expect me to talk of new things when we have not yet finished the programme of 1920? A soldier does not talk of new campaigns until he has successfully fought the one in which he is engaged. How can you think of other fortifications until the one you have besieged has not surrendered?"

Gandhi made his first important speech at Wardha after the long period of silence:

"During the year of silence I have given my most earnest thought to it and have come to the conclusion that we can have swaraj, even Ram Raj, if we fulfil the triple programme—a programme in which men and women, young and old, Hindus, Musalmans, Christians, Government servants and all can alike take part. I am more convinced than ever that swaraj is impossible to be attained if there is no Hindu-Muslim unity, if we still suffer from the curse of untouchability and if our middle classes refuse to understand the gospel of swadeshi. Do not think that I am sticking on to this programme out of obstinacy or perversity. There is nothing on earth that I would not give up for the sake of the country excepting of course two things and two only, namely, truth and non-violence. I would not sacrifice these two for all the world. For to me Truth is God and there is no way to find Truth except the way of non-violence. I do not seek to serve India at the sacrifice of Truth or God. For I know that a man who forsakes Truth can forsake his country, and his nearest and dearest ones. Now is the time to act. For how long is a man to go on talking? He may do so once, twice, aye, a hundred times, but action or example is his last resort. . . Even if the whole of India ranged on one side were to declare that Hindu-Muslim unity is impossible, I will declare that it is perfectly possible, I will say that if there is anything like God or Truth on earth, Hindu-Muslim unity is also possible. Even if masses of people were to burn khadi publicly and say it is an insane programme, I will declare that those people have gone mad. In the same way even if all the Hindus of India were to be ranged against me in declaring that untouchability, as we know today, has the sanction of the shastras or the Smritis, I will then declare that these shastras and these Smritis are false. Everywhere shall I go forth thus uttering the three articles of my creed, my Kalma and my Gayatri, so that I may be true to myself and my Maker."

On the eve of the Congress, at Sorbhog, a way-side station, he received the news of the assassination of Swami Shraddhanand on December 23. In *Young India* he wrote:

"The expected has happened. Swami Shraddhanandji passed a day or two at the Satyagraha Ashram at Sabarmati, now about six months ago, and told me, in the course of his conversations that he often received letters threatening his life. Where is the reformer who has not a price put upon his head? There was, therefore, nothing untoward in his getting the letters. And there is nothing untoward in the assassination having taken place.

"Swamiji was a reformer, he was a man of action, not of words. His was a living belief. He has suffered for it. He was bravery personified. He never quailed before danger. He was a warrior, and a warrior loves to die, not on a sick-bed but on the battlefield.

"Shraddhanandji became seriously ill about a month ago. Dr. Ansari was, as his physician, giving him all the loving attention he was capable of giving. The telegram I received from his son, Indra, in reply to my inquiry at the beginning of the month, was that he was better and that he wanted my love and prayer, both of which he had before the asking.

"God had willed for him a martyr's death and so, though he was still on the sick-bed, he died at the hands of an assassin who had asked to be admitted to the swamiji's presence for the purpose of holding a religious discourse on Islam, who was admitted at the swamiji's instance, and who, under pretence of wanting water to quench his thirst, had swamiji's faithful servant, Dharam Singh, sent out to fetch water, and who, in absence of the servant, deposited two death wounds in the patient's breast, as he was lying in his bed. We have not the last words of the swamiji, but if I knew him at all, I have no doubt that he prayed to his God to forgive him who knew not that he was doing anything wrong. In the language of the Gita, 'happy the warrior who achieves such a blessed death.'

"Death is at any time blessed, but it is twice blessed for a warrior who dies for his cause, that is, truth. Death is no fiend, he is the truest friend. He delivers us from agony. He helps us against ourselves. He ever gives us new chances, new hopes. He is, like sleep, a sweet restorer. Yet it is customary to mourn when a friend dies. The custom has no operation when the death is that of a martyr. I cannot mourn over this death. He and his are to be envied. For

though Shraddhanandji is dead, he is yet living. He is living in a truer sense than when he moved about in our midst in his giant body. The family in which he was born, the nation to which he belonged are to be congratulated upon so glorious a death as this. He lived a hero. He has died a hero.

"But there is another side to the shield. I regard myself as a friend of the Musalmans. They are my blood brothers. Their wrongs are my wrongs. I share their sorrows and their joys. Any evil deed done by a Musalman hurts me just as much as that done by a Hindu. This foul deed has been done by one who bears a Musalman name. As a friend of the Musalmans, therefore, I deeply regret the event. The joy of the death is thus tempered by the sorrow that an erring, misguided brother has been the cause of it. Martyrdom can, therefore, never be wished for. It becomes a thing of joy only when it comes unsought. We may not gloat over the errors of the least of our fellows.

"But the fact is that an error often refuses to become patent until it becomes atrocious. It dies only after being completely disgraced.

"This tragedy has a national importance. It draws our pointed attention to an evil that is eating into the vitals of the nation. Both Hindus and Musalmans have the choice before them. We are both on our trial.

"Hindus may, by being resentful, disgrace Hinduism and postpone the unity that must come. They can by self-restraint show themselves to be worthy of the message of the Upanishads and of Yudhisthira who was the embodiment of forgiveness. Let us not ascribe the crime of an individual to a whole community. Let us not harbour the spirit of retaliation. Let us not think of the wrong as done by a Musalman against a Hindu, but of an erring brother against a hero.

"Musalmans have an ordeal to pass through. There can be no doubt that they are too free with the knife and the pistol. Sword is no emblem of Islam. But Islam was born in an environment where the sword was and still remains the supreme law. The message of Jesus has proved ineffective because the environment was unready to receive it. So with the message of the Prophet. The sword is yet too much in evidence among Musalmans. It must be sheathed if Islam is to be what it means—peace. There is danger of Musalmans secretly endorsing the mad deed. It will be a calamity for them and

the world. For ours is after all a world problem. Reliance upon the sword is wholly inconsistent with reliance upon God. There should be, on their part, unequivocal mass condemnation of the atrocity. I wish to plead for Abdul Rashid. I do not know who he is. It does not matter to me what prompted the deed. The fault is ours. The newspaperman has become a walking plague. He spreads the contagion of lies and calumnies. He exhausts the foul vocabulary of his dialect, and injects his virus into the unsuspecting, and often receptive minds of his readers. Leaders, too, 'intoxicated with the exuberance of their own language', have not known to put a curb upon their tongues or pens. Secret and insidious propaganda has done its dark and horrible work, unchecked and unabashed. It is, therefore, we the educated and the semi-educated class that are responsible for the hot fever which possessed Abdul Rashid.

"It is unnecessary to discriminate and apportion the share of blame between the rival parties. Where both are to blame, who can arbitrate with golden scales and fix the exact ratio of blame? It is no part of self-defence to tell lies or exaggerate.

"It is too much to hope, but swamiji was great enough to warrant the hope that his blood may wash us of our guilt, cleanse our hearts and cement these two mighty divisions of the human family."

On December 26 the Congress met for the first time in Assam. Gauhati beat all previous records, and in an incredibly short time erected, in the midst of surroundings of great natural beauty, on the banks of the Brahmaputra, a city under khadi canvas. Assam bamboo, Assam mud, Assam straw, Assam khadi and Assam labour were responsible for the very simple but artistic huts erected on the banks of the Brahmaputra.

Over 10,000 people attended the session. Immediately after the presidential address by Srinivas Iyengar, Gandhi moved the condolence resolution and said, "Let us not shed tears, but chasten our hearts and steel them with some of the fire and the faith that were Shraddhanandji's. He has astonished the nation with an unbroken record of bravery." He called Abdul Rashid a brother and did not regard him as guilty of the swami's murder. "Guilty, indeed, are all those who excited feelings of hatred against one another. The sinners are the leaders of both the Hindu and Muslim opinion and some papers in India have become a walking plague." Gandhi fervently appealed that all should take a lesson by his

death as he served his country while he was alive. "Let us cleanse our heart and wash it with the innocent blood of swamiji."

Mahomed Ali, in supporting the resolution, saying: "While I do whole-heartedly associate myself with the condemnation of the atrocious deed, I would not be true to my faith and, therefore, to the nation, if I did not say that the same value would not be put by the Musalmans as by the Hindus upon every part of Swami Shraddhanand's life-work."

Another resolution moved by Gandhi was that on South Africa. He drew the attention of the people to the fact that the colour bar in South Africa, from which their countrymen were suffering, was nothing but a repercussion of Indian untouchability. It, therefore, behoved them to put their own house in order. He reminded South African statesmen that history showed that those who, having power, abused it, prepared for their ruin and implored them to grant Indians the elementary justice which they demanded.

On the question of work in the councils, it was definitely laid down that the Congressmen in legislatures should not merely refuse to accept ministership or other office in the gift of the Government but should oppose the formation of a ministry by other parties. The Congress councillors were asked to throw out all the proposals for legislative enactments by which the bureaucracy proposed to consolidate its powers. They were advised to move resolutions and introduce and support the measures and bills which were necessary for the healthy growth of national life and the advancement of the economic, agricultural, industrial and commercial interests of the country and for the protection of the freedom of person, speech, association and of the press.

A resolution making the habitual wearing of khadi compulsory on every one who sought to exercise a vote as a Congressman then came up before the Subjects Committee. Aney stoutly opposed it as one who had no faith in khaddar. Another member supporting him appealed to Gandhi's sense of justice and fair play. Gandhi, who was requested by the president to be present on the occasion, dealt with this in a few sentences: "Let me say that my sense of justice will be reconciled only by the restoration of the spinning franchise. If a stiffening of the franchise is, as I think it certainly is, necessary for national growth, am I not justified in laying down conditions for it? If any member should charge me with motives

to exclude any party, I should feel deeply sorry, if not insulted. This amendment is a plea for purification. If you feel that it is to be observed in its breach, if you are going to pass it here and defy it as soon as you leave the Congress, I ask you to reject it. As the rule at present stands it is humiliating and must be removed or radically changed. Khaddar must stand on its own bottom. If you carry the resolution, I want you to do so with all the implications I have mentioned. I do not want any patronage, as I do not give any. I am a lover of my own liberty and so I would do nothing to restrict yours." The resolution was passed by an overwhelming majority with shouts of "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-jai".

At Gauhati, he was not a passive spectator. He took an active part in the deliberations, so much so, that two resolutions passed by the Subjects Committee had to be reverted the next day. One of them related to the Nabha state and other to currency. A third one on independence, was criticized by him from the Congress platform as well as in *Young India*. He wrote:

"Year after year a resolution is moved in the Congress to amend the Congress creed so as to define swaraj as complete independence and year after year happily the Congress throws out the resolution by an overwhelming majority. The rejection of the resolution is proof of the sanity of the Congress. The moving of the resolution betrays the impatience—pardonable in the circumstances—of some ardent Congressmen who have lost all faith in the British intentions and who think that the British Government will never render justice to India. The advocates of independence forget that they betray want of faith in human nature and, therefore, in themselves. Why do they think that there can never be change of heart in those who are guiding the British people? Is it not more correct and dignified to own that there is no change of heart because we are weak? Nature abhors weakness. We want from the British and the world at large not mercy but justice that is our due. Justice will come when it is deserved by our being and feeling strong.

"I am sure that the staunchest votary of independence does not mean that he will not have any British association on any terms whatsoever. When he says so, he means, as one of the supporters of the resolution admitted in answer to my question, that the British people will never accept association on equal terms. This is totally different from rejecting British association on any terms.

"Indeed, the word 'swaraj' is all-embracing. It does also include complete independence as it includes many other things. To give it one definite meaning is to narrow the outlook, to limit what is at present happily limitless. Let the content of swaraj grow with the growth of national consciousness and aspirations. We may be satisfied with dominion status. The future generations may not be, they may want something better. Swaraj without any qualifying clause includes that which is better than the best one can conceive or have today. Swaraj means even under dominion status a capacity to declare independence at will. So long as we have not achieved that capacity we have no swaraj. This is the least it should mean. South Africa has achieved that status today. It is a partnership at will of free peoples. Between Britain and the dominions there is a partnership at will on terms of equality and for mutual benefit. What India will finally have is for her alone to determine. This power of determination remains unfettered by the existing creed. What, therefore, the creed does retain is the possibility of evolution of swaraj within the British Empire or call it the British Commonwealth. The cryptic meaning of swaraj I have often described to be within the empire if possible, and without, if necessary. I venture to think that it is not possible to improve upon that conception. It is totally consistent with national self-respect and it provides for the highest growth of the nation.

"After all the real definition will be determined by our action, the means we adopt to achieve the goal. If we would but concentrate upon the means, swaraj will take care of itself. Our explorations should take place in the direction of determining not the definition of an indefinable term like swaraj but in discovering the ways and means."

On the council front all the communal organizations fought with one another and unitedly they condemned the Congress. Commenting on the vicious political situation in the country, Gandhi said that the masses were not interested in party complications which were above their heads: "For them there is only the spinning wheel. To paraphrase a celebrated proverb the wheels of God grind slowly but most effectively. I am engaged in attending to these tiny wheels of God. They are ceaselessly moving. Their efficiency is daily and visibly growing. When the storm is blown over and the parties are united, Hindus, Musalmans and the suppressed have joined hands,

they will find that the country has been prepared by silent hands for effecting not a punitive and violent boycott but a health-giving, non-violent, constructive boycott of foreign cloth. The nation must exhibit some universal strength and power, be they ever so little. That is this boycott of foreign cloth. I have not ceased to lead that simple wheel which daily hums to me the distress of the masses. For better or for worse, I have staked my all on the charkha, for it represents to me Daridranarayan—God of and in the poor and in the downtrodden."

## *Silence Broken*

1927

GANDHI broke his one year's political silence at Gauhati and resumed the work undertaken in 1925. He had only one message now—the charkha, and one objective—the collection for the memorial of Deshbandhu: "Since the object of the All-India Deshbandhu Memorial is village organization and that through the spinning movement, all these collections, therefore, automatically become part of the All-India Spinners' Association which is the agency through which the memorial collections are to be utilized for the purpose." He announced his programme for 1927:

"If all goes well I hope during the year to cover, besides Bihar, part of Maharashtra, Madras Presidency including Karnatak, U.P., Bengal and Orissa. I should love to visit the other provinces also if time and health permit and if they intend to subscribe to the memorial, that is, khadi work.

"To Orissa I have promised to go and pass there, so far as it is humanly possible, the month of November, not because I expect to make large collections but because it is to my mind an epitome of our distressful condition. Orissa regenerate is to me the regeneration for the whole of India. It is a land which need not be the poorest in the country. Its people are in no way inferior to those of the other parts of India. They have a fine history all their own. They have magnificent temples. They have the Lord of the Universe in their midst who knows no distinction between his creatures. And yet, sad to relate, under the very shadow of the mighty temple people die of hunger in thousands. It is a land of chronic poverty, chronic famine, chronic disease. Nowhere have I seen in the eyes of people so much blankness, so much despair, and so much lifelessness as in Orissa. I look forward to my stay in November with sad pleasure.

"It is a province that can be, ought to be, easily organized for spinning, because the people have no work. The whole of Orissa

cannot be transplanted to the factories of Bengal or the factories of all India put together. It would be wrong even if it was possible. Happily it is not possible. The people must live on their own land, learn to be resourceful, industrious, and learn to be happy. They have forgotten what happiness can be. Let the workers of Orissa understand their own responsibility. I expect them to throw themselves heart and soul into the spinning movement. Let them not think of the whole of Orissa. Let them think of single villages where they will establish themselves, and where they may by prayerful and persistent effort lift the people out of the slough of despond into which they have stuck.

"And though as I have said I do not expect to make large collections, I shall welcome the only pies of the people who will attend meetings even as I welcomed them when I travelled in 1921. The sight of old people with their trembling fingers untying the knots which firmly held their pies and willingly surrendering them to me is never to be forgotten. I want to see it again and renew, if a renewal is necessary, the determination that this winter of despair is to be changed into the summer of hope and happiness within a measurable distance of time.

"May I ask the organizers to bear in mind that the tour is to be almost incessant and that I must do my editing and attend to my correspondence during the hours they may leave for me and in the trains? Besides Mondays at least three hours should be left for me in addition to the time required for ablutions and meals. Night demonstrations must be avoided. It is impossible after a strenuous day's work to stand the strain of disturbance during sleeping hours.

"And as this is to be a purely business tour, the meetings should be so arranged and the audiences should be so seated as to leave passages for the collectors to pass to and fro. All shoutings and noise should be avoided. I have observed that where the management is efficient, collections mount up. The audiences have invariably been found by me to be responsive. Though the thousands of the rich are welcome, I know that it is the coppers and single rupees of the poor people that bless the movement. It is theirs and let them freely contribute to it their mite."

Immediately after the Congress session he spent a few days in Calcutta, Sodepur and Comilla. His short stay in Calcutta was full of engagements—laying the foundation-stone of the buildings

of the Chittaranjan Seva Sadan and of the memorial to Ashwini Kumar Dutt, and attending meetings in memory of the late Swami Shraddhanand.

Seva Sadan was a child of Das and Gandhi. Das had made a gift of his residence for charitable purposes. The trustees of the Deshbandhu Memorial Fund, after paying off the debt for which the house was mortgaged by Das, built a women's hospital known as Chittaranjan Seva Sadan. It was to lay the foundation-stone of this hospital that Gandhi was invited. "If I seem today laying the foundation of an ordinary maternity home," he said, "I am sure that from the point of view of Deshbandhu it is a step forward to swaraj." He alluded to the suspicion expressed in some quarters that the Bengalis being of a parochial outlook the memorial would also take a parochial character. "I would not mind the Bengalis absorbing the whole of India in Bengal, for then the old Panditji from U.P. and myself an old *bania* from Gujarat would be left free to have some rest. I would not mind in the least the whole of India being absorbed in Bengal that gave birth to Rabindranath, Ram Mohun Roy, Keshub Chunder Sen, Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Vivekananda, Bengal which was hallowed by the sacred feet of Chaitanya, Bengal which is sanctified by the Ganges and the Brahmaputra. But the fear is baseless, as Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy has declared on behalf of the trustees, that the Seva Sadan would be conducted on the same broad lines as Deshbandhu served his motherland. The institution is a living tribute to one who had the emancipation of women at heart, those downtrodden sisters of ours who are the victims of our lust and passion. It does not belong to this or that trustee, it belongs to the nation. Let us strive to make the institution worthy of Deshbandhu and let it immortalize his memory in India."

His visit to Sodepur, a suburb of Calcutta, was in response to Satish Dasgupta of Khadi Pratisthan, where Satish Babu worked with his devoted staff the constructive programme. In about nine months' time they had invested Rs. 70,000 in purchase and lease of thirty bighas of land and buildings thereon for the Pratisthan's technical department. The opening ceremony was a quiet function in which several thousands participated.

Next he went to Comilla and spent a couple of days at the Abhoy Ashram which Suresh Babu and his ardent followers reared with

zeal and devotion. The special feature of their social work was that the ashram had seven schools for untouchable boys and girls. The ashram did also substantial medical relief work.

At a prayer meeting Gandhi referred to the activities of Suresh Babu and Satish Babu and said: "You are the pioneers and like the Jamnotri and Gangotri. Be you as those two streams. As I think of you I picture to myself two fine horses running abreast, drawing the khadi carriage at full speed, vying with each other. You have achieved a unique success inasmuch as you do not depend on extra-provincial help for the sake of your products. You have bent the women of Bengal to your will—all honour to them—and they are proud to wear saris that you supply to them. Let then the strength and weakness of each be the strength and weakness of the other, and let the Khadi Pratisthan look in its hour of difficulties to the Abhoy Ashram, and vice versa."

There was a meeting in Comilla on January 5. When Gandhi began to speak in Hindi, the audience was a little disappointed. But they observed discipline and he repaid their patience by an impassionate utterance in English, his first speech after the Congress on the work before the country:

"You have been so kind to me in giving me permission to speak in Hindi. If only because I want to show you my appreciation of your kindness, I propose to say a few words to you in English. Every time that I am obliged to speak in the English language before an audience of my countrymen, I feel humiliated and ashamed. I have urged upon Bengali audiences several times not to put an undue strain upon my loyalty, not to put an undue strain upon Bharat Mata herself. It is the easiest thing possible for every Indian north of the Vindhya to pick up Hindi within a month. Try it and tell me if what I say is not true. Let us not say that our mother tongue is only Bengali or Gujarati or Punjabi, as the case may be. These are provincial languages. When we sing that ode to the motherland, 'Bande Mataram,' we sing it to the whole of India. Shall we not then live up to it? I ask you, therefore, next time I happen to come here or you invite me to come, to insist upon my speaking to you in Hindi and Hindi alone. That is one thing.

"We have seen the last session of the Congress. On the sacred banks of the Brahmaputra in the midst of that magnificent foliage and scenery, almost unrivalled in the world, our leaders deliberated.

They have evolved the council programme. But how many of us can take a direct part in the working of that programme? How many of us can enter councils and the Legislative Assembly? And how many of us are entitled to elect members to these legislative bodies? Are the millions of the villagers enfranchised? Is India living in her ten or twenty cities, or is she living in her 700,000 villages? What is the programme that can weld together thirty crores of people scattered on a surface 1,900 miles long and 1,500 miles broad in 700,000 villages? What is it that every villager, man, woman and child, Hindu and Musalman, can do with profit and at the same time uplift the whole of India? The one and unequivocal answer is the spinning wheel and khaddar. The message of khaddar can penetrate to remotest villages if we only will that it shall be so. The spinning wheel can be turned by millions of villagers of India who have been reduced to pauperism, who have been ground down to dust, not merely under the foreigners' heels but under your heels, under my heels. We the city dwellers are living upon the labour and upon the wealth of these villagers; not like the Americans, not like the Englishmen, who live upon the exploitation of Asiatic races or the so-called weaker races of the earth. Even they would be obliged to take up the spinning wheel or any equivalent, if they were not able to exploit India, China, Africa and other parts of the earth. We do not exploit them, because it is a virtue of necessity with us. I hope that a time is coming when out of the fullness of our hearts, out of a wider national outlook, we shall disdain of our own free will to exploit a single nation of the earth no matter how weak. I hope that in your lifetime and mine that time is coming when we shall reach our freedom, and having reached it, we shall say to all the nations of the earth that they need not fear us, as we have lived in perpetual fear of the so-called civilized races of the earth. You may not believe me today. You may call me, if you like, a madman. But the time is coming when you will say that what that old man said was right and that if India was really to prosper in her villages and not in her cities the spinning wheel was the only instrument of India's prosperity and India's freedom.

"Hence it was that you saw the phenomenon at Gauhati, which I did not expect, which I had not asked for, however much I desired it. But you saw at Gauhati the extraordinary phenomenon

of the Congress franchise being improved along khaddar lines. I know there were bickerings about it. But I also know that it was the pressure of the popular mind that extorted that improvement in the franchise. The leaders made that important improvement because they saw that khaddar and khaddar alone was the only passport to the hearts of the villagers. Let me assure you that it was khaddar that won the elections for the Swarajists. You may not know, or perhaps you know, that in Madras even those who were otherwise opposed to khaddar were obliged to take it up at the time of appealing to the electorate. As the days roll on you will find that khaddar will gain in importance, because it has intrinsic worth about it; and because no national popular organization contains for its working so many self-sacrificing, able, young, educated men as the khaddar organization, because no organization is capable of giving work to an almost unlimited number of patriotic youths who will be content with an honourable livelihood and who will be content to pass their lives in the closest touch with the villagers and share their food, their sorrows and joys. I invite you to show me any other organization which has that capacity in it.

"Believe me, khaddar is not a dying cult. There is no fall in the barometer of khaddar. Five years' experience shows that it has been an undoubtedly gradual, but a steady and hopeful rise. It could not have been otherwise. Because India wants it, because her millions require full meals in order to sustain their energy, the Congress has passed the resolution making it necessary for the Congressmen to wear khaddar habitually and not merely on ceremonial occasions. They may wear mill cloth on rare occasions, when it is absolutely necessary for their bread and butter, but they dare not, if they are honest Congressmen, habitually wear anything but hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar.

"Now a word about untouchability. A great hero and patriot Swami Shraddhanandji died for the sake of the untouchables. He loved them as his own children, and if it was in his power he would have banished untouchability from the shores of India. And what does that banishment mean? It means universal love. It means translating into action this great message of the Gita: treat the Brahmin and the bhangi alike, if you would but know God. But how are they alike? A Brahmin is any day superior to the bhangi in learning, and how am I to treat them both alike? The Gita says

that you should treat them even as you would wish to be treated by them, or even as you would treat yourself. That hero and martyr translated this teaching into action in his own life and has sanctified it, and sealed it with his blood. Let that blood purify us, and let it remove the last taint of any isolation or aloofness that we may be harbouring against those brothers of ours whom in our arrogance we call the 'untouchables'. They are not untouchables, we are untouchables. Let them have every attention and kindness that they deserve from us. During my Comilla visit I have seen two villages which are predominantly occupied by the so-called untouchables. Had I not been told, I should not have known that the people I saw were untouchables. I could see no difference between them and the others who were standing with them there. They eat, drink, think and feel even as we do. If a sum total of their virtues, vices and privileges they are denied were to be made and compared with our virtues and vices and the privileges we enjoy and deny to them, I am sure in God's books we should find our debit side far heavier than theirs. Let us then think no more of any single person on earth as an untouchable. That is the lesson that comes down to us from South Africa. A just nemesis has descended upon us there. Just as we are treating our brothers here, our kith and kin are being treated as pariahs and bhangis in South Africa. The moment we purge ourselves of the sin, the moment we are free from the curse of untouchability, you will find the shackles dropping off our countrymen in South Africa.

"I dare not touch the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity. It has passed out of human hands, and has been transferred to God's hands alone. Even as Draupadi forsaken by her husbands and forsaken by men and gods alike, asked God and God alone to come to her help, and God gave her unfailing help, so it is with me and so should it be with everyone of us. Let us ask for help from God, the All-Powerful, and tell Him that we His creatures have failed to do what we ought to do, we hate one another, we distrust one another, we fly at one another's throat and even become assassins. Let our hearts' cry then ascend to His throne, let us wash His feet with tears of blood and ask Him to purge our hearts of all hatred in us. We are disgracing His earth, His name and this sacred land by distrusting and fearing one another. Although we are sons and daughters of the same motherland, although we eat the same food,

we have no room for one another. Let us ask God in all humility to give us sense, to give us wisdom.

"You have listened to me with the greatest attention. I have also given you what I don't willingly give to the audience—an English speech, and that at some length. I now want my reward. I want you tomorrow to come to the Abhoy Ashram and denude it of every yard of khaddar in its store, if my message, the message of the paupers of India, has gone home to you. There you will see a band of workers working for them and for you. They are the link between you and the villagers. They are trying to do their level best to serve the motherland. I want you to put your hands into your pockets and give me what you have, what you can and what you will, not out of shame, not out of any pressure that you may feel because you are in this meeting, not out of patronage for me or affection for me. I shall use your affection for other work if you will give me your affection. I want you to give me what you can and what you have for the sake of paupers, for the sake of those who do not even get one square meal a day.

"There is no better way of industrializing the villages of India than the spinning wheel. No man has yet been able to show a better or more effective substitute—even an equal substitute—than the spinning wheel for the millions of Indians who are idle for at least four months in the year, who are starving for want of a square meal, and for whom even one anna a day means a fortune. I plead on behalf of them. May God help you all to understand this very simple message."

In the middle of January he paid a visit to Benares to attend the annual function of Gandhi Ashram conducted by Kripalani. It had a chequered history, beginning with the withdrawal from the Hindu University of 200 students, formation of a *vidyapith*, a depletion in ranks and the concentration of the few determined workers, left after ebb and flow, on khadi work. Their determination won the day and the ashram which produced khadi worth Rs. 48 in 1921 now within a span of five years produced khadi worth Rs. 65,312. His visit to Benares was meant to stimulate the local demand for khadi manufactured by the ashram.

On an invitation from Malaviya, Gandhi gave the message of khaddar to the students of the Benares Hindu University. Nearly two thousand youths had gathered to hear him under a spacious

*shamiana* specially erected for the viceregal visit which had preceded Gandhi's, just by a week.

"No one is listening to you. Why not stop talking of khaddar?" That was the advice that was being given him in some quarters. "But why should I stop reciting my favourite mantra," he asked "when I have before me the example of Prahlad of old refusing to give up Ramanam in the teeth of tortures worse than death? And I have not had to go through any tortures yet. How can I give up the only message that the condition of my country has been whispering to me? Panditji has collected and has been collecting lakhs of rupees for you from the rajas and maharajas. The money apparently comes from these wealthy princes, but in reality it comes from the millions of our poor. For unlike Europe the rich of our land grow rich at the expense of our villagers, the bulk of whom have to go without a square meal a day. The education that you receive today is paid for by the starving villagers who will never have the chance of such an education. It is your duty to refuse to have an education that is not within the reach of the poor, but I do not ask that of you. I ask you to render just a slight return to the poor by doing a little *yajna* for them. For he who eats without doing his *yajna* steals his food, says the Gita. The *yajna* that was required of the British civic population during the war was for each household to grow potatoes in its yard and for each household to do a little sewing. The *yajna* of our age and for us is the spinning wheel. Day in and day out I have been talking about it, writing about it. I shall say no more today. If the message of the poor of India has touched your hearts, then I want you to raid Kripalani's khaddar stores tomorrow and denude it of all their stock, and to empty your pockets tonight. Panditji has cultivated the art of beggary. I have learnt it from him. If he specializes in laying the princes under tribute, I have learnt to be equally shameless in emptying the pockets of the poor, for the benefit of those who are poorer than they."

On the morning of January 9, Shraddhanand Day, Gandhi and Pandit Malaviya walked in procession from Gandhi Ashram to Dashashwamedh Ghat, performed ablutions, offered prayers in the Vishwanath temple. A few yards from the temple the gathering formed itself into a meeting and *Mahimnah Stotra* was recited; some one conducted congregational repetition of Ramanam, and Gandhi

delivered a brief speech emphasizing the outstanding significance of Shraddhanand's martyrdom, namely, purification of self and of religion, and ceaseless striving after self-control and brahmacharya which summed up the swami's life. All who came under the comprehensive term "Hindus", as defined by the Hindu Mahasabha, took part in the prayers at the Vishwanath temple, even Buddhism being represented by a German woman. The untouchables also joined in this procession and prayer.

On January 11, Gandhi's Bihar tour started. "I have come here to do business—to collect money for charkha and khadi and to sell khadi. Who knows this may be my last visit to Bihar! Let me do as much business as I can." This was the one-minute speech that Gandhi addressed to a crowd that came to receive him at a railway station. He began with Daltonganj in Chhota Nagpur, then to Gaya through the coal-fields, and then he crossed the Ganges at Patna and having been right through the rich alluvial tracts of Chapra district, had a quiet day at the village Jiradehi. Then he went through some more picturesque parts of the district and again to east and north to Darbhanga.

At Daltonganj the villagers from the hill-sides had come from a distance of twenty miles or more, mustering in their thousands. One speech or one speaker could not reach them at a time, so he first addressed the people in front, then those in the rear and then on the sides. The collections reached Rs. 526, although the bulk of the contributions were in copper and nickel.

At Mairwa there was a spectacular meeting. Over 30,000 people had seated themselves, almost in battle array, the vast mass including elephants that had carried some of them to the meeting, having an appearance of a peaceful military camp. There was not a stir when Gandhi came and none even when it was announced that he would first give a few minutes to the women in purdah squatting in a corner. He addressed the mammoth gathering from several places. His message was short, "Empty your pockets for the poor." The response was generous; the piles of coins collected required three men to carry them. The villagers gave Rs. 1,000 in all; the collection there worked out at two pice per head. The meeting at Gopalganj was nearly quite as big, but the realizations were much less, as the meeting was tightly packed and there was scarcely any room for the collectors to move about.

The country-side was still instinct with life, no matter how many ups and downs the movement might have undergone. There was much more khadi in evidence than in the towns and the response to collections always generous. The upper classes had, as everywhere, suffered from so-called depression, with the result that the response from the town and the city dwellers had been far from satisfactory. At Gaya the purse collection might have been bigger if it had been better organized. The response at Chapra and Sewan had been the poorest though even there the poor men's mite was commendable. The day on which the biggest collection had been done during the Bihar tour was January 18, when Rs. 7,500 were collected from Dalsingserai, Samastipur and Darbhanga.

The women's meetings were crowded and their response generous. Gandhi's message to them was to tear down purdah: "Chastity is not a hothouse growth. It cannot be superimposed. It can never be protected by the surrounding wall of purdah. It must grow from within, and to be worth anything it must be capable of withstanding every unsought temptation. It must be as defiant as Sita's. It must be a very poor thing that cannot stand the gaze of men. Men, to be men, must be able to trust their womenfolk, even as the latter are compelled to trust them. Let us not live with one limb completely or partially paralysed. Rama would be nowhere without Sita, free and independent even as he was himself. But for robust independence Draupadi is a better example. Sita was gentleness incarnate. She was a delicate flower. Draupadi was a giant oak. She bent mighty Bhima himself to her imperious will. Bhima was terrible to every one, but he was a lamb before Draupadi. She stood in no need of protection from any one of the Pandavas. By seeking to interfere with the free growth of the womanhood of India, we are interfering with the growth of free and independent-spirited men. What we are doing to our women and what we are doing to the untouchables recoils upon our heads with a force thousand times multiplied. It partly accounts for our weakness, indecision, narrowness and helplessness. Let us then tear down the purdah with one mighty effort."

A special feature of women's meetings was the collection of ornaments, a good beginning having been made at Sonepur. "Think of Sita," he said. "Do you think she went about with Rama in his fourteen years' forest wanderings with heavy ornaments like you?

Do you think they add to your beauty? Sita cared for the beauty of her heart and covered her body with pure khaddar. The heavy ornaments you wear are not only ugly, but harmful inasmuch as they are the permanent receptacles of dirt. Free yourselves of these shackles and relieve the poverty of the people who have no clothes, much less ornaments, to wear." And the heavy ornaments fell in Gandhi's laps.

At Sonepur, Gandhi made a new departure by taking a pile of khaddar with himself and selling it at every station and every meeting. He made a brisk business, and by the end of January he left Bihar. While he toured, he made collections for the khadi work and he took stock of the constructive activities in *Young India.* On January 20, he wrote:

"During my tour in so far as it has progressed up to now, I have observed that spinning organizations have not an accurate register of spinners and that the figures supplied and published by me from time to time in these pages were based upon the deductions drawn from the actual wages paid to the spinners. For statistical information the calculation is sound enough because it must err on the right side, that is, of understatement. But it is not good enough for the movement itself. The spinning movement depends for its permanence upon a vital and direct contact being established between the workers and the spinners; for, then only shall we be able to understand the wants, aspirations and limitations of the spinners. The object is to penetrate the remotest homes in the innumerable villages of India and to introduce a ray of hope and light into these homes. This we shall never do, if we do not establish a living touch with the spinners. We cannot, therefore, be satisfied with the work of middlemen whom we may not and do not know. We must be able to trace the course of every pie till it is safely deposited in the hands of the spinners. Let it be remembered that spinning is the central factor of the movement, not weaving, not dyeing, not printing, not even carding and ginning, anterior though the last two processes are to spinning. For, the economic solution depends upon a supplementary employment being found for the largest number of the semi-starved millions. That employment by far the best is spinning and that alone.

"The Bihar figures show 489 weavers against 2,698 spinners. My own observation is that ten spinners are required to feed one

weaver, both working for the same amount of time. The ultimate ambition is to teach the spinners carding and ginning so as to enable them to increase their earnings as spinners without much effort and much training. This is being done on a fairly large scale in Bihar, Bengal and the Madras Presidency. The Spinners' Association can justify its existence, therefore, only upon its achieving a progressive amelioration in the economic condition of the vast masses who can be reached in no other way in a shorter time. The movement depends also for its increasing influence and vitality upon this fact of its tender care for the millions of whom it has as yet only touched but a small part.

"A complete register of spinners is an absolute necessity until spinning has become an automatically working movement beyond risk of destruction. The cost that the keeping of such a register may involve will be worth undertaking, if we are to put the movement on a stable foundation. What an accurate and simultaneous entry of every pie received and spent in a banking corporation is to its honest existence and steady growth, an accurate register of spinners is to the honest existence and steady growth of the spinning movement. I hope, therefore, that every spinning organization will without any loss of time set about keeping a full and up-to-date register of its spinners. Needless to say that the workers who will be in charge of the registers and who will come in contact with the spinners must be men—and how nice if they were women—of unimpeachable character and purity. In my notice of the Abhoy Ashram report I made an incidental observation that our statements of figures must not contain 'abouts' and 'nearlies'. Let me reiterate for the information of all concerned that in this spinning movement which is fraught with tremendous consequences, we cannot put too much stress upon the absolute necessity of members of our organizations being and remaining beyond suspicion, and if we are to attain this standard of purity, we will have to develop a thick skin enough to stand and take in good part well-meant suggestions, criticisms and observations."

"Manufacture of souls", in Ruskin's words, was Gandhi's aim: "The more I penetrate the villages, the greater is the shock delivered as I perceive the blank stare in the eyes of the villagers I meet. Having nothing else to do but to work as labourers side by side with their bullocks, they have become almost like them. It is a tragedy

of the first magnitude that millions have ceased to use their hands as hands. Nature is revenging herself upon us with terrible effect for this criminal waste of the gift she has bestowed upon us human beings. We refuse, to make full use of the gift. It is the exquisite mechanism of the hands that among a few other things separates us from the beast. Millions of us use them merely as feet. The result is that she starves both the body and the mind. Owing to this waste, we are living in a state of suspended animation. It can be revived if every home is again turned into a spinning mill. With it will at once revive the ancient rustic art and the rustic song. A semi-starved nation can have neither religion nor art nor organization."

With such faith in the charkha and its infallibility he delivered his message to the people. From Bihar he went to C. P. None of those huge crowds scrambling for *darshan* in Bihar were to be seen here. In Bihar the little organization that there was, was spontaneous and sprang from the people, Rajendra Prasad always remaining behind the scene. The C.P. and Berar tour was Bajaj all over. Many days before the visit, he had rehearsed the tour himself, and fixed seventeen places for Gandhi to cover in seven days.

In C.P., the intelligentsia were apathetic, and the masses, who were disciplined in the days of Tilak, had few local workers to guide them. Gandhi's tour began at Gondia, the extreme west, and ended at Malkapur, the extreme east, of the Malkapur district. Gondia had in anticipation of his visit collected a purse of Rs. 5,500. So there were no collections to be made, only a khadi shop had to be opened and Gandhi made a new departure here. He did not declare it open with a speech; he simply sat down with a yard measure, a pair of scissors, and with a cash-memo book before him. There was a great rush and Gandhi sold to every customer himself and signed the receipts as salesman. He sat there hardly an hour and sold khadi worth Rs. 10 per minute, and motored away to the next place. "My action is my speech," he said. "I did not speak at Gondia. I simply sold Rs. 500 worth of khadi and I was glad. Why was I glad, knowing as I did that when crores of rupees worth of cloth is dumped down in our country from abroad, Rs. 500 worth khadi is a drop in the ocean? I know the shame of my having to sell khadi and tempt you with a cash-memo signed by myself. But what am I to do when you will not understand the value of such a simple thing as khadi?"

At every place he repeated Lokamanya's slogan "Swaraj is my birthright", adding his own rider, "and you cannot have it without khaddar." He emphasized the meaning of swaraj, and gave his definition of a swarajist. "The business of the swarajist is not like the old man of the sea to ride on the backs of poor folk, but to make them a return in the shape of wearing and popularizing khadi. Do not talk of winning swaraj without making a fair return to the villager for the daily exploitation to which you subject him." At Chanda, where the municipality was making an annual contribution to khadi, he said: "Do not throw away money on garlands. For every rupee saved on these garlands you give sixteen women one meal. Are not we ashamed to be deaf to the cry of the poor on whose toil we live and from whose soil we draw our sustenance? If you cannot wear khadi manufactured by them, you had better stop crying 'Lokamanya-ki-jai'. Show some of his spirit, do some of his work, show in your action a particle of his overflowing love for the poor and then take his name."

He emphasized that India was the poorest country in the world, millions of whose population was semi-starved, if only because their earnings were less than three pice a day. In the interest of economy he issued instructions to the organizers: "Let them save as much as they can by avoiding all decorations save only those which may be required to attract people's attention. In that case they can think of several artistic things which cost nothing or very little. Thus they can have flags and buntings out of waste khaddar. Flowers may be avoided altogether and yarn garlands may be presented. Yarn must not be damaged by being tied into knots, so that it can be subsequently used for weaving or any similar purpose. Money also can be saved by avoiding the printing of addresses. The best calligraphists among the organizers can write out the address on simple handmade paper and the paper can be nicely sewn on to a piece of khaddar, or if a little volunteer boy or girl would embroider the letters on a piece of khaddar it would be still better, the thread for embroidery too being hand-spun. It will be a good exercise for organizers if they must give their khaddar addresses in caskets to find out something cheap, local and artistic."

The run on khadi was a regular feature of every meeting. The purses collected at all the places were substantial, thanks to the merchants and thanks to Jamnalal Bajaj's efforts. The Government

officials and the Liberals like Sir Moropant Joshi also contributed generously. Even at Wun, Yeotmal and Amraoti, the strongholds of the Responsivists, the sale of khaddar was considerable, and the collections were good, though not so much as in Bihar. At Akola, thanks to Nanabhai Mashruwala, who acted as a link between non-co-operators and others, even some lawyers participated in the functions. Here the women had not only collected Rs. 500, but invited Gandhi to open a charkha class.

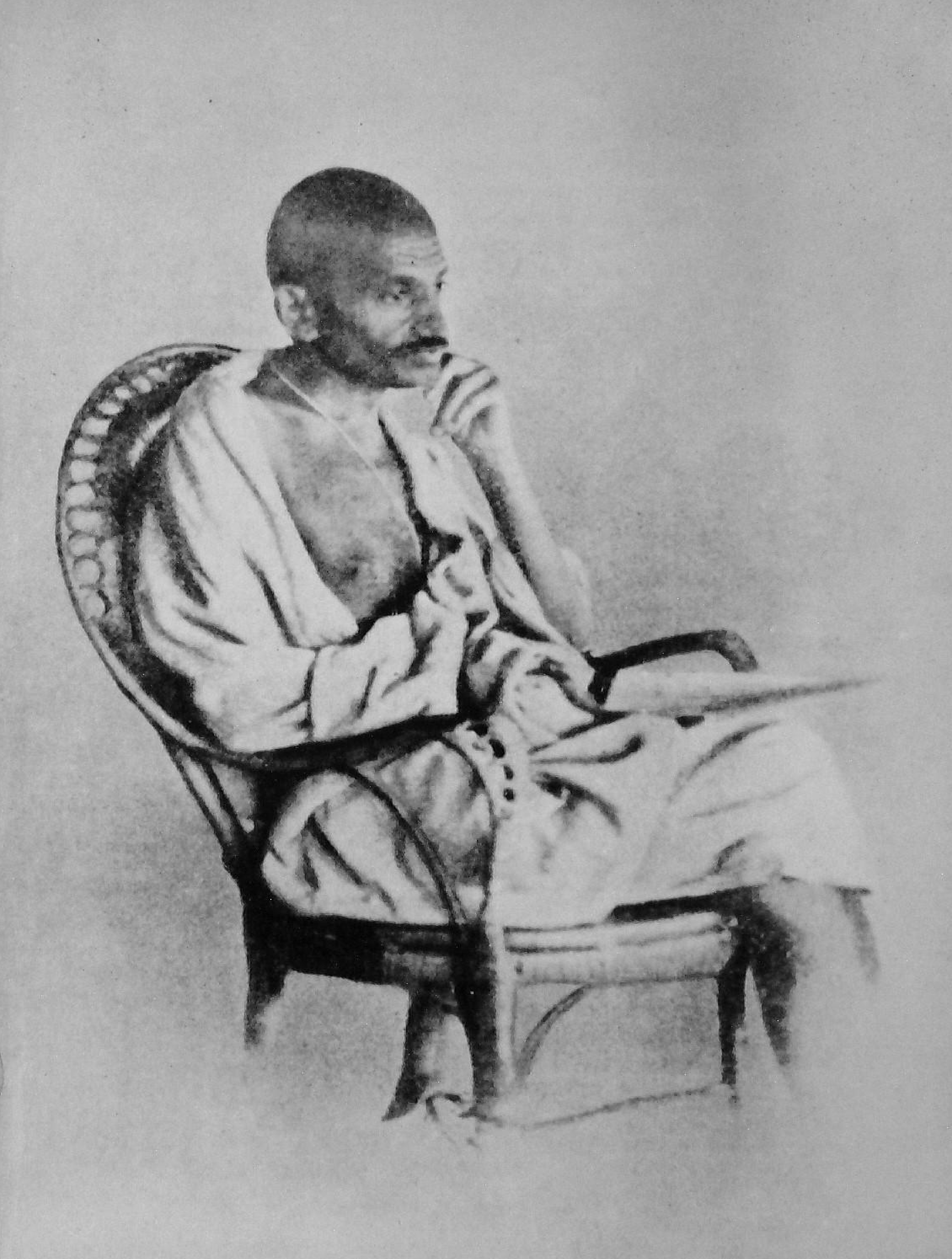
Just as Gandhi entered Nagpur, he was greeted by Parsi women all clad in khadi. Dr. Cholkar, who introduced Mrs. Byramji, said, "Here is a Parsi lady who uses Rs. 1,000 worth of khadi a year." She attended the meeting, gave her widow's mite of Rs. 200 and placed with Gandhi an order for Rs. 1,000 worth of khadi from Sabarmati ashram.

The child of the new movement in C.P. was the Khamgaon National School. It had been a growing institution, maintained out of public funds and had two hundred boys, hundred of whom were resident students and fifty had their board and lodging free. The school building was erected by the students. Khadi-wearing and spinning was compulsory in the school. On his visit Gandhi examined the brightest of the students in English, Sanskrit and the charkha. The result did not satisfy him and he gave the teachers minute instructions regarding the teaching of Sanskrit and English. For the three highest forms, they had a course of carpentry, clay-modelling, tailoring, carpet-weaving and painting; the students had an option to choose any of them. Addressing the teachers on the place of the charkha in the syllabus, he said: "The charkha has a place on your programme, but it is one out of the four or five things you teach here. Now I want you to understand that the charkha has a place all its own, for reasons that should be obvious to you. For the charkha is not one of the professions that you teach. A profession is for earning a livelihood, and if the charkha was to be taught as a profession it should have no place on your syllabus. It has a special purpose. When you put it in a line with carpentry, clay-modelling, painting, you are guilty of a confusion of thought. Charkha is an instrument of service. In a national school, where the nation expects us to train national servants, the scheme of studies will centre round the charkha. It is a science in itself and it is a science which gives us a knowledge of the means of ameliorating

the condition of the masses. Do you know that we have not one national institution where mechanical engineering is taught and where good spindles are made? If you learn mechanics, concentrate on learning how to make a true spindle and how to mend a wrong one. You should be able to say the circumference of an ideal wheel, the distance between the axle and the poles, the number of revolutions of your spindle, etc. A carpenter in a national school will not have as his ambition the making of an ideal cabinet, but of an ideal charkha. In short, you should study the charkha scientifically and with religious zeal, with a view to making it the mightiest lever of the nation's salvation."

Speaking of untouchability at Khamgaon, he said: "Anything that is prejudicial to the welfare of the nation is untouchable, but no human being can be untouchable, and I regard it as fiendish or satanic to regard a fifth of the land as untouchable." At Akola he said: "How in face of the fact that no scriptural text mentions a fifth *varna*, and in face of the injunction of the Gita to regard a Brahmin and a bhangi as equals, we persist in maintaining this deep blot on Hinduism, I cannot understand. It is to the service of the untouchables that Shraddhanandji devoted the best part of his life. He lived and moved and had his being in the service of the suppressed class. What shall I say of the attitude that persists in holding up a wholly irreligious practice as religious? Let us search ourselves and purge our hearts of all narrowness, let us realize that it is a just nemesis that is punishing us in South Africa and that our treatment of our brethren is no less iniquitous than the white man's treatment of our countrymen in South Africa."

There was no occasion for discussion because, the intelligentsia kept itself aloof from Gandhi's politics. However, Mr. Saklatwala, a Communist M.P., had a long interview with him at Yeotmal. He gave Saklatwala a patient hearing and published his appeal in *Young India* with a reply "No and Yes": "Comrade Saklatwala is dreadfully in earnest. His sincerity is transparent. His sacrifices are great. His passion for the poor is unquestioned. I have, therefore, given his fervent appeal to me that close attention which that of a sincere patriot and humanitarian must command. But in spite of all my desire to say 'yes' to his appeal, I must say 'no,' if I am to return sincerity for sincerity or if I am to act according to my faith. But I can say 'yes' to his appeal after my own fashion. For



*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi addressing the Sholapur mill workers, February, 1927

*Courtesy : Randive*

Gandhi accompanied by Mahadev Desai starting from his residence for a meeting, Dhulia, 1927

Courtesy : Randive

Visit to a physical institute in Dhulia, 1927

*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi and Malaviya inspecting a highly bred cow, Jill, at the Imperial Dairy, Bangalore, July 1927

underneath his intense desire that I should co-operate with him on his terms, there is the emphatic implied condition that I must say 'yes' only if his argument satisfies my head and heart. A 'no' uttered from deepest conviction is better and greater than a 'yes' merely uttered to please, or what is worse, to avoid trouble.

"In spite of all the desire to offer hearty co-operation, I find myself against a blind wall. His facts are fiction and his deductions based upon fiction are necessarily baseless. And where these facts are true, my whole energy is concentrated upon nullifying their, to me, poisonous results. I am sorry, but we do stand at opposite poles. There is, however, one great thing in common between us. Both claim to have the good of the country and humanity as our only goal. Though we may for the moment seem to be going in opposite directions, I expect we shall meet some day. I promise to make amends when I discover my error. Meanwhile, my error, since I do not recognize it as such, must be my shield and my solace.

"For unlike Saklatwala, I do not believe that multiplication of wants and machinery contrived to supply them is taking the world a single step nearer its goal. Comrade Saklatwala swears by the modern rush. I whole-heartedly detest this mad desire to destroy distance and time, to increase animal appetites and go to the ends of the earth in search of their satisfaction. If modern civilization stands for all this, and I have understood it to do so, I call it satanic and with it the present system of Government, its best exponent. I distrust its schemes of amelioration of the lot of the poor, I distrust its currency reform, I distrust its army and navy. In the name of civilization and its own safety, this Government has continuously bled the masses, it has enslaved the people, it has bribed the powerful with distinctions and riches and it has sought to crush under the weight of its despotic regulations the liberty-loving patriots who would not be won over either by flattery or riches. I would destroy that system today, if I had the power. I would use the most deadly weapons, if I believed that they would destroy it. I refrain only because the use of such weapons could only perpetuate the system though it may destroy its present administrators. Those, who seek to destroy men rather than their manners, adopt the latter and become worse than those whom they destroy under the mistaken belief that the manners will die with the men. They do not know the root of the evil.

"The movement of 1920 was designed to show that we could not reform the soulless system by violent means, thus becoming soulless ourselves, but we could do so only by not becoming victims of the system, that is, by non-co-operation, by saying an emphatic 'no' to every advance made to entrap us into the nets spread by Satan. That movement suffered a check but is not dead. My promise was conditional. The conditions were simple and easy. But they proved too difficult for those who took a leading part in the movement.

"What Comrade Saklatwala believes to be my error and failure I regard to be the expression of my strength and deep conviction. It may be an error but so long as my conviction that it is truth abides, my very error must, as it does, sustain me. My retracing my steps at Bardoli I hold to be an act of wisdom and supreme service to the country. The Government is the weaker for that decision. It would have regained all lost position if I had persisted after Chauri Chaura in carrying out the terms of what was regarded as an ultimatum to the Viceroy.

"My comrade is wrong in saying that the South African movement was a failure. If it was, my whole life must be written down as a failure. And his invitation to me to enlist under his colours must be held to be meaningless. South Africa gave the start to my life's mission. Nor do I consider it to be wrong to have offered, during the late war, the services of my companions and myself, under my then convictions, as ambulance men.

"This great M.P. is in a hurry. He disdains to study facts. Let me inform him that the khadi movement is not on the wane. It did last year at least twenty times as much work as during 1920. It is now serving not less than 50,000 spinners in 1,500 villages besides weavers, washermen, printers, dyers and tailors.

"Saklatwala asks what khaddar stands for. Well, it stands for simplicity, not shoddiness. It sits well on the shoulders of the poor and it can be made, as it was made in the days of yore, to adorn the bodies of the richest and the most artistic men and women. It is reviving ancient art and crafts. It does not seek to destroy all machinery but it does regulate its use and check its weedy growth. It uses machinery for the service of the poorest in their own cottages. The wheel is itself an exquisite piece of machinery.

"Khaddar delivers the poor from the bonds of the rich and creates a moral and spiritual bond between the classes and the

masses. It restores to the poor somewhat of what the rich have taken from them.

"Khaddar does not displace a single cottage industry. On the contrary it is being daily recognized that it is becoming the centre of other village industries. Khaddar brings a ray of hope to the widow's broken-up home. But it does not prevent her from earning more if she can. It prevents no one from seeking a better occupation. Khaddar offers honourable employment to these in need of some. It utilizes the idle hours of the nation. The esteemed comrade quotes the work of those who offer more lucrative employment. Let him know that khaddar does that automatically. Khaddar cannot put annas into the pockets of the poor without putting rupees into the pockets of some, whereas those who begin their work in the cities, though they are no doubt doing good work, touch but the fringe of the question. Khaddar touches the very centre and, therefore, necessarily includes the rest.

"But the whole of the impatient communist's letter concentrates itself upon the cities and thus ignores India and Indian conditions which are to be found only in her 700,000 villages. The half a dozen modern cities are an excrescence and serve at the present moment the evil purpose of draining the life-blood of the villages. Khaddar is an attempt to revise and reverse the process and establish a better relationship between the cities and the villages. The cities with their insolent torts are a constant menace to the life and liberty of the villagers.

"Khaddar has the greatest organizing power in it because it has itself to be organized and because it affects all India. If khaddar rained from heaven it would be a calamity. But as it can only be manufactured by the willing co-operation of starving millions and thousands of middle-class men and women, its success means the best organization conceivable along peaceful lines. If cooking had to be revived and required the same organization, I should claim for it the same merit that I claim for khaddar.

"My comrade finds fault with my work among the labourers in Jamshedpur because I accepted an address in Jamshedpur not from the Tatas but from the employees. His disapprobation is due, I expect, to the fact that the late Mr. Ratan Tata was in the chair. Well, I am not ashamed of the honour. Mr. Tata appeared to me to be a humane and considerate employer. He readily granted,

I think, all the prayers of the employees and I heard later that the agreement was being honourably kept. I do ask and receive donations for my work from the rich as well as the poor. The former gladly give me their donations. This is no personal triumph. It is the triumph of non-violence which I endeavour to represent, be it ever so inadequately. It is to me a matter of perennial satisfaction that I retain generally the affection and the trust of those whose principles and policies I oppose. The South Africans gave me personally their confidence and extended their friendship. In spite of my denunciation of British policy and system I enjoy the affection of thousands of Englishmen and women, and in spite of unqualified condemnation of the modern materialistic civilization, the circle of European and American friends is ever widening. It is again a triumph of non-violence.

"Lastly, about labour in the cities. Let there be no misunderstanding. I am not opposed to organization of labour, but as in everything else, I want its organization along Indian lines, or if you will, my lines. I am doing it. Indian labourer knows it instinctively. I do not regard capital to be the enemy of labour. I hold their co-ordination to be perfectly possible. The organization of labour that I undertook in South Africa, Champaran or Ahmedabad was in no spirit of hostility to the capitalists. The resistance in each case, and to the extent it was thought necessary, was wholly successful. My ideal is equal distribution, but so far as I can see, it is not to be realized. I, therefore, work for equitable distribution. This I seek to attain through khaddar. And since its attainment must sterilize British exploitation at its centre, it is calculated to purify the British connection. Hence in that sense khaddar leads to swaraj.

"The mahatma I leave to his fate. Though a non-co-operator I shall gladly subscribe to a bill to make it criminal for anybody to call me mahatma and to touch my feet. Where I can impose the law myself, at the ashram, the practice is criminal."

## *Pilgrim's Progress*

### 1927

AT MALKAPUR, the last stage in the Berar tour, Jamnalal Bajaj put Gandhi in charge of Dastane, a veteran worker of Khandesh and erstwhile member of the bar. He had opened a small ashram at Pimprale to train workers in all the processes of cloth-making. The message of khaddar was carried to the villages by Dastane and Thakkar and their efforts had begun to bear fruit. In addition to the handsome purse given at Chopra, 140,000 yards of yarn were presented to Gandhi. As regards the collections this tour was as good as the previous one, thanks to Manilal Kothari who had visited the important places in Khandesh in anticipation of the tour. People from villages flocked everywhere and in some places they exhausted the khadi put up for sale.

In the second week of February, 1927, the tour of Maharashtra began at the east corner of the Khandesh districts, and went right through the centre of the two districts up to Shahade in the west and broke off at Dhulia, thence going south to the Nasik as well as Ahmednagar districts. In Khandesh districts Gandhi visited about thirty places within a week.

One of the special features of the tour was the auctioning of the caskets at the meetings where they were given. The beginning was made at Jalgaon and the practice continued up to Dhulia. "You must know," he said, "that excepting things which I can hand over to Malkani who is collecting such things at the Gujarat Vidyapith, I cannot afford to carry these caskets with me. For I carry no trunks with me, nor have I any provision at the ashram to keep them. Don't you think that in doing so I am in any way disregarding or belittling the love with which they are being given. On the contrary, I propose to return the love in the best manner I can, that is, by converting the caskets into money for the work which is nearest my heart and for which you are showering

your love on me." The argument went home; at a tiny village like Shahade a trifling casket fetched Rs. 300.

Another feature of the tour was that whereas in Berar the critics avoided Gandhi, during this tour they were good enough to give him in writing their questions to be answered at public meetings. At Amalner, a doubt was expressed as to the utility of carrying the message of the charkha to the textile workers. "There are 2,000 labourers here and they form the bulk of the population. Do you expect them to wear khadi? Do you expect the millowners to wear khadi?" Gandhi replied:

"You may be employing 2,000 labourers here but do not forget that you tear them from the soil, do not forget that your mills can provide only a handful with labour, and can never find employment for the millions who must be rooted to the soil and who want more work. Do I seek to destroy mill industry, I have often been asked. If I did, I should not have pressed for the abolition of the excise duty. I want the mill industry to prosper; only I do not want it to prosper at the expense of the country. Millowners who support me understand my attitude and many want this movement to prosper, even if its prosperity should mean their loss."

During the tour, at one or two places, he was asked what had happened to the crore collected for Tilak Swaraj Fund. He said: "The questioners had every right to put this question even though they might not have contributed a pie to the fund. A public fund becomes public property and, therefore, every member of the public is entitled to know in detail the administration of such funds." He further explained:

"The accounts have been published regularly by the All-India Congress Committee. Copies of the audited account can be had at any time from the Congress secretaries or the treasurers. Every pie has been accounted for. There is no doubt that in some instances, those to whom funds were entrusted were not faithful to the trust, but that is as much as to say that the Congress like all institutions, is an imperfect body having in its fold all sorts of men. I know of no institution in the world which does not have dishonest agents. The Congress is no exception. I can say this that no loss has been sustained beyond what a careful merchant suffers. The little loss that had been sustained is due not to negligence but has occurred in spite of vigilant inspection and auditing. It should be further borne

in mind that the Congress has had in Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and in Sheth Jamnalal Bajaj an incorruptible working secretary and an incorruptible working treasurer respectively. Moreover seventy-five per cent of the funds were administered locally by the local representatives who had assisted in raising the funds and who were trusted by the people. Lastly, the largest amounts were mostly earmarked and controlled by the donors, subject no doubt to the conditions that they were to be used only for the purposes coming within the programme of non-co-operation and the accounts were to be open to inspection by the Congress agents. I have absolutely no regret about having raised the fund and my conscience is clear as to its administration. Everything that was humanly possible to guard against fraud, maladministration and misappropriation was done. The fund has served an immense national purpose. The tremendous organization that came into being all of a sudden could not have been created without this great national fund to which both rich and poor contributed handsomely."

At Dhulia, a Liberal like Barve, a Responsivist like Javdekar, an Independent like Nana Saheb Dev and confirmed no-changers like Thakkar and Balubhai Mehta refused to allow their political differences to come in the way of their appreciation of the message of khadi. The programme was crowded, but everything was so orderly that Gandhi could address six meetings during the day, spinning on the charkha throughout the speeches: "You will not regard me as impertinent, if I go on spinning whilst I address you. I do so because of wonderful stillness here, and because I think I can best respond to your affection by giving an object-lesson in the thing I most believe in."

Throughout the tour of Maharashtra the intelligentsia showed complete apathy but the masses responded quickly. In Ahmednagar, Sangamner, Sholapur and Gulbarga all khadi was sold and in some of the places there was not enough khadi to cope with the demand. And everywhere the collections were good. Gandhi had noted in some detail the way in which, at Ahmednagar, he was tempted to put not only the caskets but the garlands to auction and the surprising way in which the results of the auction reacted on the enthusiasm of the people who contributed more to the fund, which from the original amount of Rs.1,700 went up to Rs.5,000. The practice was continued with uniform success, not only in big towns

but small places like Akalkot where the garlands were auctioned at Rs. 50 to Rs. 60.

Everywhere there were addresses from the local bodies. At Dhulia he struck a significant note: "During my wanderings throughout the land I have not yet come across a single local body which has been functioning of its own independent initiative and which I could point to as an ideal body. Mr. Lionel Curtis, remarking on the contrast between an Indian village and an English village, said that whereas the one gives you an impression of general untidiness and reminds you of a village built on a dunghill, the other gives an impression of cleanliness, health and beauty all around. Of course, he knew nothing of the condition of the Indian villager, he did not know that his daily income was five per cent of that of the English villager. But let us not ignore one substratum of truth in his remark. There is no gainsaying the fact that our villager betrays a woeful ignorance of even the rudiments of village sanitation. One could deplore the race prejudice amongst the South African Europeans, but their attempts to keep their towns healthy and sanitary were heroic and worthy of imitation. Do not say that politics occupy all your time and that you have no time for other things. It is a lame excuse. The capacity to look after the village and town sanitation is included in our capacity for swaraj and when we demonstrate it, nothing on earth can stand between us and swaraj. You may be sure that we shall be able to retain only as much as our capacity has won for us. Some of our local bodies keep only those roads clean as are likely to be used by the Government officials, but then have no regard for the roads which are used day and night by our poor villagers and their bullocks, and which are always and everywhere ill-kept. Cannot we make the villagers' and the bullocks' lot a little less irksome?"

At Sholapur he said he would leave just one thought with the municipal councillors who voted him the address. He agreed with Patrick Geddes that the town planning of a nation was the measure of its civilization, and he would add that not only individual but communal and civic cleanliness was next to godliness.

Gandhi was taxed a lot by the intellectual snobs in Maharashtra but he was not found wanting. There were also rumours afloat and he had to reply them. At Pandharpur the people in charge of the temple somehow received the report that Gandhi was going there

with a European friend. He made a pointed reference to this matter in his speech:

"I am sorry that neither the Buddhist friend who was with me at Benares nor the 'untouchable' girl I have adopted is with me. But you may be sure that I should not have visited the temple without them if they had been with me. Had I left them out, I should have been guilty of insulting Vithoba Himself. I would not mind even an atheist entering our temple, for I know that God can take care of Himself. Who is there in the world who can insult the God in the image? But the lady friend who was with me is a Buddhist and, therefore, a Hindu. If she had no right to enter the temple, who else can have it? I have visited many places of pilgrimage and I have been pained to see hypocrisy and cupidity there. It is necessary first to purify the drunken and dissolute worshippers in charge of some of these temples. If the things continue as they are today, if we do not bestir ourselves and go through the necessary penance and cleansing and self-purification, I tell you that not even the twenty-two crores of Hindus can keep Hinduism alive. The Himalayas are spotlessly snow-white in virtue of the spotless glory of the countless sages who laid down their lives performing penance in their caves. Only such penance can save us and our religion from perdition today."

At the end of February he went from Satara to Belgaum on the way to the Konkan districts—a part of India which had never been visited before by the political leaders, because of the long distances and inaccessibility of the places. He began with Savantwadi, thence going to Vengurla and then went north along the coast to the Colaba district. In Konkan he had the heaviest programme, even Monday was not set aside for rest and quiet work. Accompanied by Appasaheb Patwardhan, he visited twenty-five places within a week and the unexplored regions revealed the great enthusiasm of the people.

At Savantwadi the ruler of the state welcomed him on his arrival, at a late hour in the night, engaged him in a talk about the charkha as he was doing his daily quota of spinning at midnight. The next morning Gandhi and Kasturbai were invited to the palace where a purse of Rs.1,000 was presented. There were the usual auction sales of garlands and caskets and other presents, and brisk sales of khadi everywhere.

At Lanje, where Gandhi reached after a long motor journey at midnight, there were people anxiously waiting to hear him. "I do not know," he said, "whether I should pity you or myself for keeping you waiting until this hour. But you know we have done what the yogi of the Gita does. The night of sleep of the ordinary mortals is a day of wakefulness for the yogi. I congratulate you on your yoga, but you will better deserve my congratulations if you show that you are true yogis by contributing for the poor, and purchasing all our khadi."

Gandhi's speech at Ratnagiri was the most important in Konkan. "Lokamanya's birthplace is a place of pilgrimage not only for me but for the whole of India," he said. He recollected that Savarkar whom he had known well in England and whose great sacrifice and patriotism were known was also residing in Ratnagiri. "We had our differences then," he added, "we have them now but they have not affected in the least our friendship. Differences of opinion should never mean hostility." He observed:

"I do not think there has been any follower of Lokamanya who has tried to carry out his mantra more than I. There may be many whose efforts are equal to mine, but no one can claim to have put forth greater effort. For I know that not only is swaraj our birthright, but it is our sacred duty to win it. For in so far as we are removed from swaraj we are removed from manhood. A proper manifestation of all our powers is impossible without swaraj. And the swaraj that Lokamanya had in view was not the swaraj only for Ratnagiri people or for Maharashtra, but for the whole of India, poor as well as rich, and swaraj has no meaning for the poor unless they have enough to eat.

"I have been told everywhere that Konkan is poor. If you are poor, the situation must be unbearable for you. You say that poor people from your parts go to Bombay and earn a living there. Do you know the price that they have to pay for their living? They live in hovels without light and air, a few feet by few feet, where several men and women are huddled together without any regard for cleanliness or decency. Are you prepared to send your mother and sisters to live under such conditions? Do you not agree that the women that go to Bombay mills are your mothers and sisters and the men your brothers? Are you prepared to see your brothers and sisters take to a life of drunkenness and shame and return home

and spread the infection of their vices? Is it worth while paying this price for the eight annas they manage to earn there?

"Our cattle are destroyed because we do not know true cow protection and our villages are ruined because we do not know true economics and sociology. The charkha can stop that ruinous process. Do you know the daily income per head of our country? Our economists say that it is one anna and six pies though even that is misleading. If some one were to work out the average depth of a river as four feet from the fact that the river was six feet deep in certain places and two feet in others, and proceeded to ford it, would he not be drowned? That is how statistics mislead. The average income is worked out from the figures of the income of the poor man as also of the Viceroy and the millionaires. The actual income will, therefore, be hardly three pice per head. Now if I supplement that income by even three pice with the help of the charkha, am I not right in calling the charkha my cow of plenty? Some men attribute superhuman powers to me, and some say I have an extraordinary character. God alone knows what I am. It is possible to disagree about the efficacy of satyagraha, but I do not think there is any reason for disagreement on these obvious facts about the charkha. If some one convinces me today that there is no poverty in India, that there are few in India who starve for want of even a few pice a day, I shall own myself to have been mistaken and shall destroy the spinning wheel.

"I ask you, therefore, to bear in mind what you mean when you say that Konkan is poor. If you are really poor there is nothing like the wheel which can cure your impoverishment and which is a safeguard for the honour of your women. Seek ye first the charkha and its concomitants and everything else will be added unto you. How can you disregard character? Does it behove the followers of Lokamanya to deride or reject the wheel?

"But you will ask, as a youth who sought to heckle me asked, 'If Lokamanya liked this, why did he not ask the country to take it up?' Well, I cannot be taken in by your question. Whether or not the Lokamanya had khadi in mind when he defined swadeshi, surely his swadeshi cannot but include khadi. I am but the heir of Lokamanya, and if I do not add to the patrimony he has left me, I would not be a worthy son of a worthy father. I pondered over the message of Lokamanya, applied my many years' experience to it

and came to the conclusion that Lokamanya's message must mean khadi. Do you know what he used to do? I am telling you of an incident that happened a short time before his death. When Shaukat Ali approached him with regard to the Khilafat question, Lokamanya said to him: 'I shall put my signature to whatever Gandhi signs, for I trust to his better knowledge in this matter.' Supposing, therefore, Lokamanya had not khadi in mind when he advised swadeshi, what does it matter? Supposing we were manufacturing spectacles here and some one were to say, 'We cannot use them, Lokamanya did not advise the use thereof,' would it be proper? We would dismiss him as a literalist, *vedavadarata* as the Gita would describe him. As the literalist interpreter of the Vedas does not grasp the infinite meaning of the Vedas, even so these literalist interpreters of Lokamanya's message miss its infinite power."

After the meeting, Gandhi called on the ailing Savarkar at his place. Savarkar emphasized that Gandhi was there not as a political leader but as a friend and incidentally asked Gandhi to clear his attitude towards untouchability and *shuddhi*. Gandhi cleared some misrepresentations and said: "We cannot have a long talk now, but you know my regard for you. Besides, our goal is ultimately one and I would like you to correspond with me as regards all points of difference between us. And more. I know that you cannot go out of Ratnagiri and I would not mind finding two or three days to come and stay with you if necessary to discuss these things to our satisfaction."

The women's meeting at Ratnagiri was a great success. Over a thousand of them had gathered to give Gandhi a purse. At Sangameshwar with a population of less than a thousand, he was given a purse of Rs. 500. At Mahad, hundreds of Shivaji's Mavlas greeted him, while at Alibag some fifteen garlands were presented and auctioned. He paid a special visit to Sasavne to see a model residential school called Vaishya Vidyashram, which was mainly for the Vaishya boys. At a quiet meeting in the evening the boys presented Gandhi with 160,000 yards of yarn spun during the month, with a piece of cloth woven out of their yarn, Rs. 501 collected from the Vaishya community, Rs. 190 from a neighbouring village, and a contribution of Rs. 63 being the value of ghee, milk and wheat that the boys had deprived themselves for one week, especially for the Deshbandhu Fund. "I had come here entirely

unprepared for these tokens of love," he said, "and my greatest joy is due to the shape these tokens have taken." As a Vaishya talking to the Vaishya boys, he said: "If you desire to take off the sinister aspect of greedy commerce, you will have to make it centre round the charkha. There are exploiters enough on this earth. If we also follow suit, we shall have to seek for our victims on other planets. Khadi is the only wholesome national trade that we can pursue and as Vaishyas I ask you not to neglect it."

In the early hours of the next morning, Gandhi had a talk with the teachers. He was not quite satisfied with the kitchen and the conservancy arrangements. "Life after all hovers between the two functions of consumption and evacuation," he said, "and you will make your institution ideal, if besides giving students a literary education you have made finished cooks and sweepers of them." A little later he performed the installation ceremony of the image of Maruti. "I instal the image of Maruti here," he said, "not merely because Maruti had the strength of the giant. Even Ravana had that strength. But Maruti had the strength of soul, and his physical strength was only a manifestation of his spiritual strength which in its turn was the direct fruit of his exclusive devotion to Rama and his brahmacharya. May you, therefore, be like Maruti of matchless valour born out of your brahmacharya and may that valour be dedicated to the service of the motherland."

The last place in the Maharashtra tour programme was Poona. Workers had an uphill task in collecting a decent contribution for the Deshbandhu Memorial, but they had succeeded in getting about Rs. 5,000 before Gandhi's arrival. The meetings in Poona were necessary not for those who were already convinced but for the unconverted. "I have none of the power of Hanuman to tear open my heart," said Gandhi, "but if any of you feel inclined to do it, I assure you you will find nothing there but the love for Rama whom I see face to face in the starving millions of India."

The students had gathered in their thousands, some of them to have fun of it, others to listen to the message, but they waited patiently until he could appear before them at about midnight. The cry for "English" was there heard for the first time from the students during this tour. "If I cannot make myself understood to Poona students, it is my misfortune, the misfortune of my country, and shall I say your misfortune," said Gandhi. But he acceded to

the students' clamour for English so far as he had to express his regret for being late at the meeting. When he saw that he had succeeded in gaining their ear, he delivered a speech in Hindi:

"It is possible that my message if delivered in English might get more silver from you, and it is probable that you might understand me better. But I hold my message to be far superior to myself and superior to the vehicle through which it is expressed. It has a power all its own, and I hope it will produce an impression on the youth of India. Whether it will produce an impression in my lifetime or not, I do not care, but my faith is immovable, and as days roll on and as the agony of the masses becomes prolonged, it will burn itself into the heart of every Indian who has a heart to respond to the message. You must understand that at a time of my life when I should be enjoying my well-earned rest, I am not going about from one end of the country to the other for nothing. It is because I feel within myself with increasing force every day the strength of my conviction that I must try until the end of my days to reach it to as many ears and hearts as possible."

The rest of his speech was a brief history of the charkha movement and the duty of the students to those at the cost of whose moral and material ruin they were receiving education. "You may, if you will, go on receiving that education, but do at least make a decent return for it. I know you have not taken to khadi, not because you are perverse, but because you lack the conviction that there is anything like the stupendous problem of poverty and unemployment, whose existence I have been declaring from the house-tops. The King of Siam refused to believe Curzon when he said to him that he was coming from a country where rivers were frozen for a part of the year. I assure you I am describing to you conditions I have seen with my own eyes when I say that thirty million people have to go without a decent meal a day."

In the middle of March, the Maharashtra tour ended and he left for the Gurukul, Kangri. There was unusual interest attaching to the institution where Swami Shraddhanand had lived and worked and which had finished twenty-five years of useful service. In the pandal were gathered together over ten thousand people.

For the first time during recent months he found his voice completely gone as he proceeded to speak, but it was not long before he regained it. "The Gurukul," he said, "was swamiji's best creation

and though he is physically not with us he lives amongst us in his Gurukul. It was his most original contribution to education, inasmuch as when we had lost our heads over western education he decided that we should think and act and educate ourselves in the Vedic way. Swamiji will live with us so long as his Gurukul lasts and the Gurukul will last so long as there is a single graduate of the Gurukul prepared to serve it with truth and self-sacrifice, and with the courage which was swamiji's and which is a synonym for forgiveness. Then there is brahmacharya on which swamiji laid the greatest emphasis and without which your education will come to naught. Avoiding lustful contact with women is not the last word on brahmacharya. It is only the beginning; the perfection is reached when the brahmachari refuses to be ruffled or angry, no matter what provocation is offered him. For anger is the destruction of *virya,* the vital essence." On khadi he was not inclined to say much that day, excepting that the removal of untouchability, another great work of the swami, would be impossible without khadi, as also the Vedic life and thought were impossible unless they had reference to the starving millions of the country.

Gandhi supported the appeal for funds and complimented the Arya Samaj and the Gurukul for their unique services. "If I have criticized the Arya Samaj," he said, "I am also anxious to give my tribute of praise for its work. And those who give hearty praise have a right to criticize too. Of all the religions and political bodies that have come into being of late years the Arya Samaj has made the greatest contribution to bridge the gulf between the classes and the masses that had been widening more and more since the advent of the British rule in India. No institution is perfect, and I could point out some of the defects of the Gurukul. But there is no questioning the fact that it has rendered a substantial service to the country. Whenever I see a Punjabi youth capable of reading and writing Devanagari, I immediately conclude that he must have had his training in one of the Gurukuls. They have done more than any other institution in those parts to revivify the Sanskrit learning and Aryan culture."

Under Gandhi's presidentship, a meeting of the representatives of various national educational institutions was held at the Gurukul. Pandit Malaviya was one of the moving spirits on the occasion and he gave whole-hearted support to khadi. "My joy knows no bounds

today, for the revered Panditji and I have the good fortune to be on the same platform for a common object," said Gandhi.

Malaviya appealed to the sadhus to wear khadi exclusively and exhorted others to follow Gandhi. "We have been talking of swadeshi these fifty years without having done anything concrete or substantial. It was given to my dear brother Gandhi to think out the most proper form of swadeshi and to place it before the country in his marvellous manner. What has that great and good man come here for, except to get from you on the sacred banks of the Ganges, in this sacred *tirtha*, the sacred pledge that you will discard foreign cloth and use nothing but khadi, except that when it is impossible to get khadi you may use Indian mill-made cloth? He is here a living embodiment of his faith in his work, and the wonderful progress the movement has made during the last three years is also before you. Please lend your helping hand in this great revival and let us pray that we may see again the golden age when we produced those fine fabrics which were the envy of all lands."

Gandhi reached Bombay on March 23 to commence his tour of Karnatak. In Bombay he overworked himself, giving speeches till midnight and slept that night at one. The next morning he had his four o'clock prayer at five because it was physically impossible for him to get up earlier. The stream of visitors and interviewers lasted until two when he left for the station. In the interval there was an engagement at Ghatkopar and on his way to the station there were patients to be seen, and the students to be spoken to.

He usually snatched some sleep in the train but that day it was not possible. He worked without any rest. At about five, he felt a sudden giddiness accompanied by numbing of the left side of the body. At Poona station he had to be bodily taken to the Bangalore Mail. The vision was blurred and it was with great difficulty he could scribble a little that he had to. After a refreshing sleep the attack subsided and in the morning he was ready again to be in harness. At Kolhapur, Gandhi addressed seven meetings, with the result that the attack reappeared. His companions advised rest but he was for keeping to the schedule at all cost.

Gandhi came to Nipani, the first place in the Karnatak tour programme. During the four days that he had to lie down, people came to the outside gate of the house where he was put up, read the daily bulletin of health and went away. On the eve of his

departure from Nipani, at the request of his host, Gandhi sat at the balcony, whilst the women working in the factory had a look at him from the courtyard and also a message. On the morning of the day of departure to Belgaum, his car was taken straight to the meeting and he quietly sat in the chair whilst the address was read and the purse of Rs. 8,457 was presented. He whispered brief thanks and drove away to Belgaum.

The doctors who had examined Gandhi at Nipani declared that it had been a lucky escape from apoplexy due to overwork and nervous exhaustion, and they advised rest and cancellation of the tour programme. Mahadev flashed the news of Gandhi's illness and the cancellation of the tour. But Gandhi's message through *Young India* continued. "It has been a matter of sorrow for me to have taken up the burden of cow protection during the ending years of my life," he wrote. On March 31, his article on cow protection appeared:

"1. Every such institution should be situated out in the open where it is possible to have plenty, that is, thousands of acres of open ground capable of growing fodder and giving exercise to the cattle. If I had the management of all the *goshalas*, I should sell the majority of the present ones at handsome profits and buy suitable plots in the vicinity except where the existing places may be needed for mere receiving depots.

"2. Every *goshala* should be turned into a model dairy and a model tannery. Every single head of dead cattle should be retained and scientifically treated and the hide, bones, entrails, etc., should be used to the best advantage. I should regard the hide of dead cattle to be sacred and usable as distinguished from the hide and other parts of slaughtered cattle, which should be deemed to be unfit for human use or at least for Hindu use.

"3. Urine and dung in many *goshalas* are thrown away. This I regard as criminal waste.

"4. All *goshalas* should be managed under scientific supervision and guidance.

"5. Properly managed, every *goshala* should be and can be made self-supporting, donations being used for its extension. The idea is never to make these institutions profit-making concerns, all profits being utilized towards buying disabled cattle and buying in the open market all cattle destined for the slaughter-house.

"6. This consummation is impossible if the *goshalas* take in goats, buffaloes, etc. So far as I can see, much as I would like it to be otherwise, not until the whole of India becomes vegetarian, can goats and sheep be saved from the butcher's knife. Buffaloes can be saved if we will not insist upon buffalo's milk and religiously avoid it in preference to cow's milk. In Bombay on the other hand, the practice is to take buffalo's milk instead of cow's milk. Physicians unanimously declare that cow's milk is medically much superior to buffalo's milk and it is the opinion of dairy experts that cow's milk can by judicious management be made much richer than it is at present found to be. I hold that it is not possible to save both the buffalo and the cow. The cow can be saved only if buffalo-breeding is given up. The buffalo cannot be used for agricultural purposes on a wide scale. It is just possible to save the existing stock, if we will cease to breed it any further. It is no part of religion to breed buffaloes or for that matter, cows. We breed for our own uses. It is cruelty to the cow as well as to the buffalo to breed the latter. Humanitarians should know that the Hindu shepherds even at the present moment mercilessly kill young male buffaloes, as they can't profitably feed them. To save the cow and her progeny—and that only is a feasible proposition—the Hindus will have to forgo profits from the trade concerning the cow and her products, but never otherwise. Religion to be true must satisfy what may be termed humanitarian economics, that is, where the income and the expenditure balance each other. Attainment of such economics is just possible with the cow and the cow only with the assistance of regular donations for some years from the pious Hindus. And it should be remembered that this great humanitarian attempt is being made in the face of a beef-eating world. Not till the whole world turns predominantly vegetarian is it possible to make any real advance upon the limitations I have sought to describe. To succeed to that extent is to open the way for future generations to further effort. To overstep the limitation is to consign the cow for ever to the slaughter-house in addition to the buffalo and the other animals.

"Hindus and the humanitarian societies in charge of *goshalas* and pinjrapoles, if they are wisely religious, will bear the foregoing conditions of cow protection in mind and proceed immediately to give effect to them."

From Belgaum Gandhi went to Amboli, a small hill-station in Savantwadi. "Well, my cart has stuck in the mire," he wrote in a letter to the inmates of the ashram. "Today it is in mire, tomorrow it might break down beyond hope of repair. What then? The Gita proclaims that every one that is born must die, and every one that dies must be born again. Every one comes, repays part of his obligation, and goes his way. I am positive that there is no disease without the existence within oneself of passion. Of course even the man who is free from passion has to die, but he drops off, without a disease or even a headache, like a ripe fruit dropping off the tree. I have aspired to and for such a consummation. The hope still abides, but who knows? The passions are not extinct, and freedom from them looks like a far-off thing."

He wrote again: "The Gita says that the man who eats without offering the daily sacrifice steals his meal. Does it not apply to me? We must spin, if we must live. Eat, drink and sleep, even the animals do. The doctor would forbid even thinking. For me cessation from carrying out of my thought into act is as impossible as cessation from thought itself. So reading, writing and spinning I am going to do. When these become impossible, starving the body that will not work would appear to be the surest remedy."

On the eve of National Week, he wrote from the sick-bed: "I would urge the reader not to fritter away the week by asking the question, 'What shall we do?' but to make the best possible use of it by asking, 'What shall I do?' and if each one will do his or her duty to the fullest measure possible, we shall soon be able to ask, 'What shall we do next?'" From Amboli, he sent down Mahadev Desai and Devadas to hawk khaddar during the National Week. For himself, he kept the wheel turning, and filled the columns of *Young India* with inspiring articles.

During the last week of April, he left Amboli for Nandi Hill. The strain of the journey and work raised his blood pressure high but soon he regained energy just enough to resume his usual strolls. Serious discussions were taboo. To a friend, he wrote: "I am quite peaceful, but even the old dame in the village can be peaceful, perched up on a hill. You are bearing the brunt, and yours is the prize, if you can keep your head cool in that ferment."

## *No Rest*

1927

In the middle of June 1927, Gandhi descended Nandi Hill and came to Bangalore where he was accommodated in a guest house belonging to the state. Many people came there every evening to take part in the prayers. The congregation gathered strength every day and one evening at the close of the prayer he had to address the people a few words of appeal and advice:

"I want you to be patient with me. That is to say, you will not crowd round me or follow me when I go out for my evening walk. I am a patient and I have yet to recover my voice. I have yet to recover my strength, I have come here to rest myself. After I get better I hope to do what little service I can to the people of Mysore. You will, therefore, give me all the rest I need and not disturb my quiet walks. This is so far as I am concerned. As for you, I may say that all of you, no matter to what faith you belong, are welcome to take part in the prayer. But there are two conditions. The first is that you should come with a prayerful mind, a prayerful heart and a prayerful attitude. Every one—Hindu, Muslim, Christian, no matter to what faith he or she belongs—can participate in the prayer. After the repetition of the verses is done, we chant *Raghupati Raghava Rajaram Patita Pavana Sitaram,* in which all who have got a voice may join, so that our prayer may gather volume, and please God, if there is a God who listens to our prayer. There is another condition. You know what *Patita Pavana Sitaram* means. We pray to God who saves the fallen and the downtrodden. I would, therefore, ask you to come in khadi, for khadi links you with the fallen and the downtrodden. As a visible token of your desire to help them I ask you all—men, women and children, young and old, of whatever faith—to come dressed in khadi."

By the end of June he was able to look forward to resuming the tour in easy stages. One meeting a day, and an informal talk

with local volunteers, he could attempt. His mind worked in many ways and always there was something original. On July 14, he suggested through *Young India* an "All-India Script":

"The Hindu-Muslim madness no doubt stands in the way of a thorough reform. But before the acceptance of Devanagari script becomes a universal fact in India, Hindu India has got to be converted to the idea of one script for all the languages derived from Sanskrit and Dravidian stock. At the present moment we have Bengali script in Bengal, Gurmukhi in the Punjab, Sindhi in Sind, Oriya in Utkal, Gujarati in Gujarat, Telugu in Andhra Desh, Tamil in Tamil Nad, Malayali in Kerala, Kanarese in Karnatak, not to speak of Kaithi in Bihar and Modi in the Deccan. If these scripts could be replaced by Devanagari for all practical and national purposes, it would mean a tremendous step forward. It will help to solidify Hindu India and bring the different provinces in closer touch. Any one who has any knowledge of the different Indian languages and scripts knows to his cost what time it takes to master a new script. For the love of his country, no doubt, nothing is difficult, and time spent in mastering different scripts, some of which are very beautiful, is in no way idly spent. But this spirit of abandon is not to be expected of millions. National leaders have to make things easy for them. Therefore, we must have an easily adaptable universal script for all India, and there is nothing so adaptable and ready made as Devanagari script. . . The movement should in no way be confused with the spread of Hindi or Hindustani as the lingua franca. Hindi or Hindustani is not designed to replace the provincial languages, but is intended to supplement them, and to be used for inter-provincial contact. Till the Hindu-Muslim tension lasts, it takes the form either of Urdu written in the Persian script, and containing a preponderance of Persian or Arabic words, or Hindi written in Devanagari, and containing a preponderance of Sanskrit words. When the hearts of the two meet, the two forms of the same language will be fused together, and we shall have a resultant, containing as many Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic or other words as may be necessary for its full growth and full expression.

"But one script is undoubtedly designed to displace all the different scripts so as to render it easy for people belonging to different provinces to learn provincial languages. The best way of achieving the purpose is first, to make the learning of Devanagari script

compulsory at least for Hindus in all the schools, as it is in Gujarat, and secondly, to print the important literature in different Indian languages in Devanagari script. Such effort has been made to a certain extent. I have seen *Gitanjali* printed in Devanagari script. But the effort requires to be made on a large scale, and there should be propaganda carried on for the spread of such books. Though I know that it is out of fashion just now to suggest anything along constructive lines that may bring Hindus and Musalmans together, I cannot help repeating that Hindus must learn Urdu if they will come nearer their Musalman brethren, and Musalmans must learn Hindi if they will come nearer their Hindu brethren. Those who have faith in real unity between Hindus and Musalmans need not be disconcerted by the present terrible expression of mutual hatred. Their faith, if it is of any value, must make them actively but unobtrusively perform, whenever possible, acts of mutual toleration, affection and courtesy, and learning of one another's language is the least that one can do in that direction. Is it not better for the Hindus to learn through ably written Urdu books by devout Musalmans what Musalmans think of the Koran and the Prophet, and for Musalmans to learn through well-written Hindi books by devout Hindus what Hindus think of the Gita and Krishna than that the respective parties should learn all the bad things that might have been said about their respective religious books and their inspirers through their ignorant or fanatical detractors?"

The tour programme had been fixed up, Gandhi staying in Mysore until August 15, covering the principal places during the period, and having brief intervals of rest. On July 3 Gandhi opened the South India Khadi Exhibition—the thing that he had set his heart on, that he wanted to be the auspicious beginning of his work after convalescence. The next programme was that of a special dramatic performance—Kabir—staged with a view to popularize Hindi and khaddar. Gandhi summed up his criticism in one phrase: Kabir in a modernized form. He thanked all concerned for the threefold pleasure of "having given to the self-appointed representative of Daridranarayan a purse not to be counted", of listening in South India to "Hindi exquisitely pronounced and rendered" and of seeing the majority of actors dressed in khadi.

On July 12, a meeting of the students was held in Bangalore and a purse of Rs.1,700 was presented to Gandhi. A copy of the

address which was in Kannada was given to him transcribed in Devanagari script. The hall was packed to its fullest capacity, and the students listened to his Hindi speech with rapt attention. It was an appeal for a study of Hindi, and for a fatter purse, for the sin of receiving education which was being paid by the poor, and which again was paid for out of a tainted source of revenue like drink and intoxicating drugs.

The next day Gandhi visited the Science Institute. The director showed him over the departments of electricity, chemistry and biochemistry. Addressing the students he said: "I was wondering where do I come in? There is no place here for a rustic like me who has to stand speechless in awe and wonderment. I am not in mood to say much. All I can say is that all these huge laboratories and electrical apparatus you see here are due to the labour, unwilling and forced, of millions. For, Tata's thirty lakhs did not come from outside, nor does the Mysore contribution come from anywhere else but this *begar* world. If we were to meet the villagers and to explain to them, how we are utilizing their money on buildings and plants which will never benefit them, but might perhaps benefit their posterity, they will not understand it. They will turn a cold shoulder. But we never take them into our confidence, we take it as a matter of right, and forget, that the rule of 'no taxation without representation' applies to them too. If you really apply it to them, and realize your responsibility to render them an account, you will see that there is another side to all these appointments. You will then find not a little but a big corner in your hearts for them, and if you will keep it in a good, nice condition, you will utilize your knowledge for the benefit of the millions on whose labour your education depends. I shall utilize the purse you gave me for Daridranarayan. The real Daridranarayan even I have not seen, but know only through my imagination. Even the spinners who will get this money are not the real Daridranarayan who lives in remote corners of distant villages which have yet to be explored. I was told by your professor, that the properties of some of the chemicals will take years of experiment to explore. But who will try to explore these villages? Just as some of the experiments in your laboratories go on for all the twenty-four hours, let the big corner in your heart remain perpetually warm for the benefit of the poor millions.

"I expect far more from you than from the ordinary man in the street. Don't be satisfied with having given the little you have done, and say, 'We have done what we could, let us now play tennis and billiards.' I tell you, in the billiard room and on the tennis-court think of the big debt that is being piled against you from day to day. But beggars cannot be choosers. I thank you for what you have given me. Think of the prayer I have made and translate it into action. Don't be afraid of wearing the cloth the poor women make for you, don't be afraid of your employers showing you the door if you wear khadi. I would like you to be men, and stand up before the world firm in your convictions. Let your zeal for the dumb millions be not stifled in the search for wealth. I tell you, you can devise afar greater wireless instrument, which does not require external research, but internal—and all research will be useless if it is not allied to internal research—which can link your hearts with those of the millions. Unless all the discoveries that you make have the welfare of the poor as the end in view, all your workshops will be really no better than Satan's workshops."

The Mahila Samaj entertained him to music, and presented a purse of Rs. 225. But not all the music and the purse could satisfy him. "Daridranarayan is insatiable and there is room enough in his belly for all the money and the ornaments you can give. The ornaments are your *stridhan* and you have a right to dispose it of as you like." The response was generous and the women vied with one another to get to the platform to give away their jewellery.

The tour continued under as easy conditions as possible and its unique feature was that he addressed every one of the meetings in Hindi. During his stay in Mysore, he availed himself of every opportunity to visit its many institutions. Addressing the Mythic Society, he said:

"I suggest that some one of you should make researches to find out what led to the curse of untouchability to descend upon this land. I wish that the learned men of Mysore, amongst whom there are some of the finest scholars, could find out authorities to show, that untouchability could be no part of the Hindu religion, that our remote ancestors through whom we received the inspiration of the Vedas and who gave us the rich heritage of the Upanishads never believed in untouchability, even as I do not, and that it is merely a vicious excrescence upon Hinduism. And I tell you that

if you can do so, among the many services you have rendered this will not be by any means the least. Workers like myself say on their own authority that this thing is no part of Hinduism. I am no scholar and have not read the shastras in the original, but my Hindu soul rises up in revolt against such an abomination. I look to you scholars and research students to arm workers like myself with authoritative declarations that would command the evidence so forceful and masterly as would dissolve the orthodox opposition. It should be the proud privilege of your society to furnish workers with authoritative texts which they could not get anywhere else, and fortify them in their work."

The visit to the Chamarajedra Sanskrit Pathashala afforded him the opportunity of giving a talk to the pundits who had gathered there. "I appreciate the honour you have done me in giving me a Sanskrit address," he said: "I hold that every Hindu boy and girl must acquire a knowledge of Sanskrit, and that every Hindu should have enough knowledge of Sanskrit to be able to express himself in that language whenever an occasion arises." He next addressed himself to the pundits: "I was pained to hear that there were pundits in Mysore who fought shy of teaching Sanskrit to the Shudras and *panchamas*. I do not know how far the contention that the Shudras have no right to learn Sanskrit and hence to read the Vedas is supported by the authority of scriptures, but as a sanatani Hindu I am firmly of opinion that even if there is any authority, we must not kill the spirit of our religion by a literal interpretation of the texts. Words have, like man himself, an evolution, and even a Vedic text must be rejected, if it is repugnant to reason and contrary to experience."

He continued: "I am glad to see so many Brahmins plying their *taklis*, but I want you not to confine yourselves to making your sacred threads out of the yarn. They, of course, will continue to be of *takli* yarn, but you will make your clothes also from that yarn of charkha. I tell you I was pained to see boys and girls dressed in foreign clothes reciting verses from the scriptures. To say the least, it struck me to be incongruous. The external is in no way the essence of religion, but the external oft proclaims the internal, and whenever I go to a Sanskrit college or to an institution where Aryan culture is taught, I look forward to being reminded of the simple and sacred surroundings of our ancient *rishis*. I am

sorry that you have not fulfilled my expectation, and I appeal to the teachers and the parents of these children to make the children true representatives of ancient culture."

Replying to the address of the Civic and Social Progress Association, Gandhi emphasized the necessity of the youths taking as much interest in social reform as in politics. For, their capacity for self-government would be measured by the extent to which they had purged themselves and their society of the many evils it was suffering from. It was well that the removal of untouchability and amelioration of the condition of the suppressed classes was in the forefront of their programme, but they should not sit still until a single educational institution or a temple for the public was closed to the suppressed classes. Coming to the question of the marriage of virgin widows and child marriages, he said:

"I have met hundreds of girls, but I have during my wanderings scarcely seen two or three who being above the age of thirteen said that they were unmarried. It is no religion to have as one's wife a girl who is fit only to sit in one's lap; it is the height of irreligion. I look to every youth to resolve not to marry a girl under sixteen. The widow has a sacred place in Hinduism, but the ancient Hindu widow was never in the wretched condition that we find the Hindu widow of today. I cannot think of a girl of fifteen becoming a widow. I do not regard a girl married who is given away in marriage by her parents without her consent and for pecuniary or other advantage. If any such girl is widowed, it is the duty of her parents to marry her again. So far as other widows are concerned, if they think that they cannot lead a life of pure widowhood, they have as much a right to remarry as have widowers in the same predicament. Let your society make these three questions its own, and try its utmost to solve them."

He was most cordially received all over Mysore and received addresses everywhere. The Tumkur municipal address mentioned with pride a budget of three lakhs for waterworks and the prospect of electrifying the town in six months. Gandhi said: "Whilst I congratulate you on this, I may tell you that I expected you to give me assurances in other matters. Can you assure me that the children in the town will be ensured a liberal supply of clean and cheap milk? You have not told me that you have done all you can for cow protection. You have told me that you have a population

of 15,000, but you have omitted to give me the strength of your livestock. There was a time when the wealth and prosperity of the people was measured by the number of children in the family and the head of cattle that it possessed. I assure you that you could have an ideal dairy here for much less than three lakhs you will spend on waterworks, or even less than Rs. 50,000 that you will invest in electricity. For much less money you have a dairy so as to make it possible for people to have milk as easily as water. Have you persuaded your *panchamas* to give up beef and liquor? What have you done for hygiene and sanitation? The West has come in for much blame from me, but its hygiene and sanitation are object-lessons for us. To me, the test of a people's knowledge of sanitation is the condition of their latrines, and I am told that the state of things here is scandalous. The most orthodox and learned amongst us do not scruple to infringe the laws of sanitation, though all scriptures say that every infringement of a law of health or hygiene or sanitation is a sin. I ask you to study this question and to aim at being ideal scavengers. So long as you do not take the broom and the bucket in your hands, you cannot make your towns and cities clean. I have been told that people in Mysore are lazy, that they do not leave their beds until six or seven o'clock. I tell you that the spinning wheel I am placing before you is a symbol of industry, and lazy people cannot work it. Time is wealth, and the Gita says the Great Annihilator annihilates those who waste time."

The taxpayers who gathered in their thousands in the municipal square of Bangalore were told by him what they should expect from their councillors: "I am glad that you have introduced here compulsory primary education. I congratulate you on your spacious roads, your splendid lighting and your beautiful parks. But while I can infer from your address that the middle and the upper classes must be happy here, I wonder if you have a poor class at all, and if you have, what you are doing to keep them clean and healthy. Have you shared in their hardships and their sorrows? Have you helped them to keep their latrines clean? Have you ever thought of the conditions in which the sweepers and scavengers live? Have you ensured a cheap milk supply for the infants, the aged and the infirm of the poorer classes? Are you sure that the foodstuffs that your provision-dealers sell are clean and unadulterated? Are you sure that the dealers cater for the rich and the poor fairly and

squarely? Have you ever thought of the poor villagers who provide you daily with vegetables and grain? Have you any gambling dens and liquor booths, and if you have, what have you been doing to protect people from them? What is the condition of your draught and milch cattle? I can ask you many more questions. If you have a satisfactory reply to each of them I can congratulate you, but if you have none, then I beseech you to give them your most earnest consideration."

There was a public meeting of the citizens of Mysore to present a purse on the last day of his stay in the city. In bidding farewell Gandhi expressed his high hopes about Mysore: "You have a distinguished engineer, you have distinguished musicians, you have a distinguished artist, and many others that I could name in various other spheres. I want you now to produce a distinguished spinning expert. You have three khadi shops here. I wish you had need for them and even more, but today I know, and this meeting is an eloquent proof of it, that there is no need for three shops. Even many of you who are sympathetically inclined towards khadi are not wearing it. Have, therefore, instead of three, one efficient khadi shop, and organize it properly. There are many institutions where the charkha has been introduced, I was told that His Highness' bodyguards were spinning, but I know how inefficiently this work is going on. In all those institutions and for the bodyguards you must engage a spinning expert. Bad yarn, like bad music, is good for nothing. I would like to assure those who would serve Daridranarayan that there is music, art, economy and joy in the spinning wheel. I have seen quite a number of institutions in Mysore—the Krishnarajamanni Sanatorium where I expected nothing, but where the patients insisted on my receiving their token of love for the poor millions; the home for the blind and the mute, of which the blind inmates have entertained me to soulful music these two days; the home for the destitute and the infirm as also your school for Adi-Karnatak boys. These are proofs of the maharaja's humanitarian spirit, but I may tell you that you have to extend it still further. The blind and the infirm have, thanks to our charitable instincts, not to go without food. But there are millions of our villagers, who cannot go out to beg, who depend on a fraction of an acre of land each, and who have often to go without food. We are responsible for their starvation and their poverty. In Mysore

which is the home of humanitarian and philanthropic institutions I would earnestly urge you to have some provision for the toiling, starving millions.

"You are doubly fortunate. You have a good climate and wonderful natural scenery, and you have a ruler, who from all accounts is good and benevolent. In a state like this there should not be a single beggar or a single man suffering from starvation and impoverishment. I saw the Krishnarajasagara Dam today and was delighted to see that wonderful engineering feat of Sir M. Visvesvaraya, the second, I am told, of its kind in the whole world. In a home of such wonderful enterprises I beg of you to make some provision for Daridranarayan."

While Gandhi was in Mysore, there were floods in Gujarat. On July 24 continuous downpour of heavy rain started and continued for a week. Large tracts in Kheda, Broach, Baroda and the neck of the land between Gujarat and Kathiawad were flooded. Hardly a house was left standing, crops and cattle were swept away and human beings lived for a week without food clinging to tree-tops. Thousands lost homes, belongings and employment. Gandhi was in touch with Vallabhbhai Patel who was conducting the relief work there, labouring indefatigably, sleeping only three hours a night. Friends advised him to rush to Gujarat. "I would be more a hindrance than a help if I went there," said Gandhi: "I could appeal to people to contribute even from here. If I went there, I would not be satisfied until I could run up and down the whole flood-stricken area, and it is physically impossible for me to do so." He wired to Vallabhbhai and cheerfully accepted the inevitable on having a reassuring reply from him. There was also a question of self-imposed discipline and he submitted to it:

"I am not here enjoying a holiday. According to my light I am pretty fully occupied in grappling with the fatal disease which is eating into the vitals not only of Gujarat but of India as a whole, a disease which is beyond all comparison very much more powerful and insidious than a week's deluge. It would not only be not meritorious but on the other hand a clear breach of duty on my part to give up this work for something else that is more tempting. We have the charge often levelled against us that we are apt to lose our heads in times of danger. To the extent that this is true, we must get rid of this shortcoming.

"None of us, especially no leader, should allow himself to disobey the inner voice in the face of pressure from outside. Any leader who succumbs in this way forfeits his right of leadership. There is much truth in the homely Gujarati proverb that 'the person concerned can see things in the earthen pot and his neighbour cannot see them even in a mirror.' I have not been able to see that it was my duty on the present occasion to run up to Gujarat."

The sad news of floods was, however, compensated by reports of friendship and mutual aid among the different communities. This warmed Gandhi's heart and he wanted the people to draw a moral from it:

"Gujarat's doings on this occasion amount, in my view, to pure swaraj. If the virtues now manifested by the people become a permanent feature of their daily life, Gujarat may be said to have acquired the fitness for, as well the power to win, swaraj.

"The havoc worked by the floods was of a most unprecedented character, before which even Dyerism pales into insignificance. Dyer killed or wounded a thousand or twelve hundred men. No one can tell the heavy toll of life exacted, of the immense property destroyed by the floods. But we did not abuse the floods. We practised satyagraha against them. We purified ourselves. We did constructive work. We achieved Hindu-Muslim unity. We removed untouchability. We became self-reliant. We placed our all at the disposal of our brothers and sisters. We did not wait for a leader. Instead of falling back before the enemy, we bravely faced him, and set to work as if nothing had happened. If we had feared the floods, if we had wasted precious time in abusing them, if we had engaged in violent struggle with them, we would only have multiplied our troubles."

In the middle of August, Gandhi started with Davangere, the northernmost point of Mysore, and then came south to Shimoga. People in small villages were quietly sitting in groups on either side of the road to pay their respects and to present their purses. These way-side purses amounted to over Rs. 600. Anantpur, a hamlet with 300 souls, had not only a khadi purse of Rs. 200, but Rs. 50 for the Gujarat relief to offer.

His public speech at Davangere was mainly devoted to the economics of God as opposed to the economics of the Devil. The speech before the temple at Harihar derived its picturesque

imagery from the surroundings in which it was delivered. "It is said, that if God made man in His image, man made God in his own, and it is no wonder, that what we see in our temples at the present day are lifeless images of us, lifeless devotees. If we would make them living images of God, we must transform our lives, we must end communal squabbles, we must befriend the suppressed, and live pure lives. Hari is the Protector in the Hindu Trinity, and Hara is the Destroyer. When God finds that the rich oppress the poor, instead of taking them under their protecting wings, He assumes the fearful aspect of Hara, and deals destruction all round. When the rich and the poor identify themselves with one another, then will Hari and Hara unite, and it is my ambition to establish a real living image of Harihareshvara by presenting a charkha to the country. The charkha is the symbol of sacrifice, and sacrifice is essential for the establishment of the image of the deity."

He continued his tour in the north-west of Mysore, through picturesque scenery, but even the Gersoppa Falls could not cast their spell on him. To Belur he went, but not for that grand monument of sculptural splendour: "Who would not be drawn to this wonderful temple of Indian art? But a representative of Daridranarayan like myself may not indulge in that feast of eyes. All my time and energy are consecrated to the service of the poor, and I confess that I should not have come to this place if Keshavdas had not promised a purse of Rs. 500."

At Arsikere, reference to Janmashtami in the address drew a speech from him on the life and teachings of Krishna:

"If we thought of Krishna on every Janmashtami day and read the Gita and resolved to follow its teachings, we should not be in our present plight. Krishna served the people all his life, he was a real servant of the people. He could have led the hosts at Kurukshetra, but he preferred to be Arjuna's charioteer. His life was one unbroken Gita of *karma*. He refused proud Duryodhana's sweets and preferred humble Vidura's spinach. As a child he was a cowherd and we still know him by the name of Gopal. But we, his worshippers, have neglected the cow today, the Adi-Karnataks slaughter cows and eat beef, and our infants and invalids have to go without cow's milk. Krishna knew no sleep or idleness. He kept sleepless vigil of the world; we his posterity have become indolent and forgotten the use of our hands. In the Gita, Krishna

has shown the path of *bhakti*, which means the path of *karma*. Lokamanya has shown that whether we desire to be *bhaktas*, or *jnanis*, *karma* is the only way, but that *karma* should not be for self but for others. Action for one's own self binds, action for the sake of others delivers from bondage. What altruistic action can be universally done, by Hindus, Musalmans, Christians, by men, women and children? I have tried to demonstrate that spinning alone is that sacrificial act, for that alone can make us do something in God's name, something for the poorest, something that can infuse activity in their idle limbs. Lord Krishna has also taught that to be a true *bhakta* we should make no difference between a Brahmin and a scavenger. If that is true, there can be no place for untouchability in Hinduism. If you are still hugging that superstition, you can cleanse yourself by getting rid of it on this the sacred day of Krishna's birth. He who swears by the Gita may know no distinction between Hindu and Musalman, for Krishna has declared that he who adores God in a true spirit by what name soever adores Him. The path of *bhakti*, *karma*, love, as expounded in the Gita, leaves no room for the despising of man by man."

Gandhi's four months' stay in the Mysore state came to an end in the last week of August. The day of leave-taking was full of sweet memories. As he started, the servants, including the scavenger, gathered at the door, to bid him farewell. "I cannot tell you how grateful I am to you," he said. "I have never in my life regarded any one as my servant, but as a brother or a sister, and you have been nothing less. It is not in my power to requite you your services, but God will do so in an ample measure."

On August 24 the tour of Tamil Nad started with its heat and its surging crowds. From Bangalore Gandhi came to the North Arcot district, covering Vellore, Arni and Arcot. Unlike Mysore it was not free from Hindu-Muslim feuds. The Gudiatham address said : "Your illness, came as a godsend. If you had come according to your original programme, you would have pained at the sorry spectacle of our dissensions from which we are now emerging." Vast masses of people greeted him everywhere. At Gudiatham the din and bustle were unbearable. With mischievous curiosity the people invaded the bungalow, blocked all light and air, and made work or rest impossible. Lanterns had to be sent for, the windows having to be closed against the unruly crowd. But there was no

remedy for the noise. As a last resource, he slipped away from the place and worked and rested in the car, a few miles away.

Having addressed tens of thousands of people in some villages, Gandhi came to Madras on September 3. During his four days' stay in the city, he addressed seventeen meetings. There were the young men aiming at the removal of the Neill statue, a symbol of "terrorism and falsehood". General Neill had been responsible for brutalities during the 1857 rebellion.

In a heart-to-heart chat of two hours, Gandhi encouraged them, warned them, and appealed to them to understand the meaning and implications of satyagraha, to eschew all bluff and bluster and camouflage and to act with truth, honour and dignity. The satyagrahis asked him, if it did not offend against the creed of non-violence to pull down the statue or to deface it. Gandhi said that provided his conditions were fulfilled, he would not regard it as against non-violence: "Statues like these are a portent. They are an eloquent proof of what the British Government finally stands for—terrorism and falsehood. Hence it is the duty of every Indian, every true Englishman, to oppose this terrorism and falsehood with all his might."

Some volunteers courted arrest and thirty were sentenced but the satyagraha did not continue for long. It failed in its immediate objective, but ten years later, the statue was removed to a museum during the Congress regime.

The Neill statue satyagraha baffled some of Gandhi's followers: "He encourages the agitation for the removal of the Neill statue as he encouraged the one for the removal of the Lawrence statue. To me it looks very like violence. And where I can see no violence he sees it, as in carrying arms for removing the Arms Act."

Gandhi put forward his point of view:

"Non-violence is made of sterner stuff. There is no doubt that the agitation for removing the Neill statue and the like is likely to increase the feeling of hatred against the English. True non-violence does not ignore or blind itself of causes of hatred, but in spite of the knowledge of their existence, operates upon the person setting those causes in motion. Were it otherwise, the fight for swaraj by non-violent means would be an impossibility. For at every step the swarajist is bound to expose to view the blemishes of foreign rule and the foreign rulers. It is perhaps now clear why a believer

in non-violence must endorse non-violent agitation for the removal of the Neill statue and the like. But the carrying of arms is not permissible for a non-violent man, for he is expected not to use them. And the total removal of the Arms Act will never be held to be a just cause. Hence carrying arms for the removal of the Arms Act can never fall under any scheme of non-violence."

Of the many meetings that he addressed in Madras the most notable was that of the cobblers. Some of them got scent of the fact that Gandhi was wearing tattered sandals, as he had no pair made of dead cattle hide. Two of them made a pair of sandals, and came to him with their offering. They had a long talk and after they heard him, they expressed their readiness to pledge themselves to use only dead cattle hide, and to get many more to take the pledge. He went to their quarters. There he realized that situated as they were, it was difficult for them to fulfil the pledge of exclusively using dead cattle hide. He saw their moral difficulty and asked them not to take the pledge, but to keep it as an objective, and do without the hide of slaughtered cattle.

During the three or four days packed with programmes Gandhi poured out his deepest feelings. At a meeting of prohibitionists he spoke passionately of drink evil:

"Ask the wife of a drunkard to be patient, see what she will think of you. I happen to be the wife of thousands of drunkards, and I cannot be patient. I would rather have India reduced to a state of pauperism than have thousands of drunkards in our midst. I would rather have India without education, if that is the price to be paid for making it dry."

In response to the request of a professor to say something about smoking and coffee and tea-drinking, he said:

"These are not necessities of life. There are some who manage to take ten cups of coffee a day. Is it necessary for their healthy development and for keeping them awake for the performance of their duties? If it is necessary to take coffee or tea to keep them awake, let them not drink coffee or tea but go to sleep. We must not become slaves to these things. But majority of the people who drink coffee or tea are slaves to them. Cigars and cigarettes, whether foreign or indigenous, must be avoided. Cigarette-smoking is like an opiate and the cigar's smoke have a touch of opium about them. They get to your nerves and you cannot leave them afterwards.

A drunkard in Tolstoy's story is hesitating to execute his design of murder so long as he has not smoked his cigar. But he puffs it, and then gets up smiling and saying, 'What a coward am I?', takes the dagger and does the deed. Tolstoy has written nothing without having had personal experience of it. And he is much more against cigars and cigarettes than against drink. But do not make the mistake that between drink and tobacco, drink is a lesser evil. No. If cigarette is Beelzebub, then drink is Satan."

Gandhi had a chat with *devadasis*. "Not one of us likes it, but how to maintain ourselves?" was their helpless cry. "Supposing I took you away, and gave you sufficient food, clothing, education and clean surroundings, would you leave this life of shame and come with me?" asked Gandhi. They said "Yes", but he had no illusion about it. He referred to it in his speech, and poured out his heart: "As I was talking to them and understanding the hidden meaning of the thing, my whole soul rose in rebellion against the custom of dedicating minor girls for immoral purposes. Calling them *devadasis*, we insult God Himself in the name of religion, and we commit a double crime in that we use these sisters to serve our lust and take in the same breath the name of God. To think that there should be a class of people given to this kind of immoral service, and that there should be another class who should tolerate their hideous immorality, makes one despair of life itself. And I assure you that as I was talking to them I saw that there was no evil in their eyes, and they were as capable of fine feelings and fine character as any other women. What difference can there be between them and our own sisters? And if we do not allow our own sisters to be used for immoral purposes, how dare we allow these to be so used? Let Hindus who are in any way connected with these things purge society of this pest. The majority of them have promised to retrace their steps, if I fulfil the promise I have made to them. But if they cannot, I shall blame not them but the society in which they are passing their lives. It is up to you to extend the hand of fellowship to these sisters, it is up to you to see that they are reclaimed from their life of shame. I know that when they are again face to face with temptation it will become difficult for them to resist it. But if man will restrain his lust and society stand up against the evil, it will be easily possible to rid the society of the evil."

On September 9, Gandhi left Madras and descended south into the interior at Cuddalore. Chidambaram was a place of pilgrimage to him, where he paid handsome tribute to the untouchable saint Nandanar:

"By his indomitable spirit and by his overwhelming faith in God, Nanda was able to bear down the haughty spirit of the haughty Brahmins and to show that in his spirit he was infinitely superior to his persecutors, who considered themselves first among mankind. He broke down every barrier and won his way to freedom not by brag, not by bluster, but by the purest form of self-suffering. He did not swear against his persecutors, he would not even condescend to ask his persecutors for what was his due. But he shamed them into doing justice by his lofty prayer, by the purity of his character, and if one may put it in human language, he compelled God Himself to descend and made Him open the eyes of the persecutors. What Nanda did in his time and in his own person, it is open to every one of us to do today in our person."

He then described what he called the khadi spirit and the inwardness of the khadi movement:

"It would be wrong perhaps on my part, if I did not say a few words showing how we can illustrate the spirit of Nanda in our daily life. In my humble opinion, we cannot better illustrate that spirit than by clothing ourselves with the 'khadi spirit'. I am not saying that we can illustrate the spirit of Nanda by wearing khadi only, but I say that we must have the khadi spirit. Even a blackguard, even a prostitute, should be expected to wear khadi, since she or he, the blackguard, must wear something even as they eat wheat and rice in this country, in common with us, but the khadi spirit means that we must know the meaning that the wearing of khadi carries with it. Every time that we take our khadi garment in the morning to wear for going out we should remember that we are doing so in the name of Daridranarayan and for the sake of the starving millions of India. If we have the khadi spirit in us we would surround ourselves with simplicity in every walk of life. The khadi spirit means infinite patience. For those who know anything about the production of khadi know how patiently the spinners and the weavers have to toil at their trade, and even so must we have patience, whilst we are spinning 'the thread of swaraj'. The khadi spirit means also an equally illimitable faith. Even as the spinner

toiling away at the spinning wheel has illimitable faith that the yarn he spins, by itself small enough, put in the aggregate would be enough to clothe every human being in India, so must we have illimitable faith in truth and non-violence ultimately conquering every obstacle in our way.

"The khadi spirit means fellow-feeling with every human being on earth. It means a complete renunciation of everything that is likely to harm our fellow creatures, and if we but cultivate that spirit among the millions of our countrymen, what a land this India of ours would be! The more I move about the country and the more I see the things for myself, the richer, the stronger is my faith growing in the capacity of the spinning wheel. If we try to reason out with our intellect the capacity of repeating of the mere name Rama, our intellect will fail to satisfy our heart, and yet I hope that there is not a single person in this audience who would consider that those *rishis*, who gave us the heritage of repeating those names, were either fools or idiots. Even so I suggest to you that the khadi spirit has all the capacity that I have described to you. But there is one condition behind it, I admit, one condition alone that attaches to the expression of that spirit. It is this that even as Ramanam became in our minds a living force, because it had behind it the unrivalled *tapashcharya* of those who gave it to us, so it is with the khadi movement. It ought to have the *tapashcharya* of those who are behind it. Every minute of my time I am fully conscious of the fact that if those who have consecrated their lives to khadi will not incessantly insist on purity of life, khadi is bound to stink in the nostrils of our countrymen. I am aware that khadi cannot compete with other articles of commerce on their own platform, on their own terms. Even as satyagraha is a weapon unique of its kind, not one of the ordinary weapons used by people, so is khadi a unique article of commerce which will not, cannot, succeed on terms common to other articles. But I know this also as certainly as I know that I am sitting here, that khadi is unique and it would outdistance every article in India today. You will, therefore, perhaps understand why I do not enthuse over all these purses you have given me. I know that if you had even a tenth of the faith that I have in khadi, you would not give your two hundreds and your two thousands out of your plenty, but you would satisfy me till there is no money required for khadi."

In his speech at Cuddalore, Gandhi spoke on the Brahmin and non-Brahmin problem:

"I have for both the parties two counsels of perfection which I can lay before you. To the Brahmin I will say: 'Seeing that you are repositories of all knowledge and embodiments of sacrifice and that you have chosen the life of mendicancy, give up all that the non-Brahmin wants and be satisfied with what they may leave for you.' The modern Brahmin would, I know, summarily reject my non-Brahmin interpretation of his *dharma*. To the non-Brahmin I say: 'Seeing that you have got numbers on your side, that you have got wealth on your side, what is it that you are worrying about? Resisting as you are, and as you must, untouchability, do not be guilty of creating a new untouchability in your midst. In your haste, in your blindness, in your anger against the Brahmins, you are trying to trample under foot the whole of the culture which you have inherited from ages past. With a stroke of the pen, may be at the point of the sword, you are impatient to rid Hinduism of its bed-rock. Being dissatisfied and properly dissatisfied with the husk of Hinduism, you are in danger of losing even the kernel, life itself. You in your impatience seem to think that there is absolutely nothing to be said about Varnashram. Some of you are ready even to think that in defending Varnashram I am also labouring under a delusion. Please, make no mistake about it. They who say this have not even taken the trouble of understanding what I mean by Varnashram.

"It is a universal law, stated in so many words by Hinduism. It is a law of spiritual economics. Nations of the West and Islam itself unwittingly are obliged to follow that law. It has nothing to do with superiority or inferiority. The customs about eating, drinking and marriage are no integral part of Varnashram Dharma. It was a law discovered by our ancestors, the *rishis* who saw that if they were to give the best part of their lives to God and to the world, and not to themselves, they must recognize that it is the law of heredity. It is a law designed to set free man's energy for higher pursuits in life. What true non-Brahmins should, therefore, set about doing is not to undermine the very foundations on which they are sitting, but to clean all the sweepings that have gathered on the foundation and make it perfectly clean. Fight by all means the monster that passes for Varnashram, and you will find me

working side by side with you. My Varnashram enables me to dine with anybody who will give me clean food, be he Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Parsi, whatever he is. My Varnashram accommodates a pariah girl under my own roof as my own daughter. My Varnashram accommodates *panchama* families with whom I dine with the greatest pleasure, to dine with whom is a privilege. My Varnashram refuses to bow the head before the greatest potentate on earth, but my Varnashram compels me to bow down my head in all humility before knowledge, purity, before every person, where I see God face to face. Do not swear by words that have, at the present moment, become absolutely meaningless and obsolete. Swear all you are worth, if you like, against Brahmins but never against Brahminism, and even at the risk of being understood or being mistaken by you to be a pro-Brahmin, I make bold to declare to you that whilst Brahmins have many sins to atone for, many for which they will receive exemplary punishments, there are today Brahmins living in India who are watching the progress of Hinduism and who are trying to protect it with all the piety and all the austerity of which they are capable. Them you do not even know. Do not run away with the belief that I am putting in a plea for Brahmins, vakils and ministers and even justices of High Courts in India. I have not thought of them in my mind at all. What both Brahmins and non-Brahmins and, for that matter, everybody who wants India to progress has to do, is to sweep his own house clean. I, therefore, suggest to non-Brahmins, who have not yet lost their heads, to think out clearly what it is that they are grieved over, and make up their minds and fight for all they are worth to remove those grievances."

Trichinopoly had many items in the programme and all that he could do to avoid them was to be silent at different functions and to deliver a short written message, "I am at the end of my resources." But he never avoided opponents: "It strengthens my position all the more by having to meet arguments I may not have thought before. I always welcome an honest difference of opinion, for I have always an open mind and have no axe to grind. And I do not remember an occasion on which after a free discussion an opponent was able to dislodge me from my position."

The experience in Mannargudi was extremely unpleasant. The pundits of Kumbakonam had taken a creditable attitude:

"We have no quarrel with you if you say that untouchability is inconsistent with public good, but pray don't say that there is no authority in the shastras for untouchability." The Mannargudi pundit, however, seemed to be cast in a different mould. For the best part of the time given him, he praised Gandhi and then tried to mystify him by a show of superior knowledge of the shastras. He had to put him down sternly. "Tell him," Gandhi said to an interpreter, "that he is putting himself out of court by citing verses which have no bearing whatsoever. The attitude is unworthy of a pundit. In a court of law the vakil, who argues as he has done, will be considered guilty of sharp practice, and it makes it terribly difficult for me to build bridge between Brahmins and non-Brahmins, because that sort of attitude is sufficient to raise the ire of every individual. If he has anything to say for untouchability, which a human being can understand, let him do so. He must understand that he is not here before lawyers, but before unsophisticated men who are trying to walk the straight path."

That brought the pundit down from the arrogant pedestal, and he began to come to the point.

"Should we not accept the *Parasharasmriti* as an infallible guide in *Kaliyuga*?" he asked.

"No," said Gandhi, "I accept no authority or no shastra as an infallible guide."

"But if you accept part of a Smriti, would you reject another part of it?"

"I reject the claim," said Gandhi, "that we should accept the whole if we accept a part."

"Then you would accept what is convenient and reject what is inconvenient?"

"That's a good question," he said. "Hinduism is not a codified religion. I shall give you what I conceive to be Hinduism. We have in Hinduism hundreds and thousands of books whose names even we do not know, which go under the short name of shastras. Now when we want to find out whether a thing is good or bad, I do not go to a particular book, but I look to the sum total of the effect of Hinduism. In Hinduism we have got an admirable foot-rule to measure every shastra and every rule of conduct, and that is truth. Whatever falls from truth should be rejected, no matter wherever it comes from, and, therefore, the burden lies on the shoulders of

the person who upholds a practice which is inconsistent with truth, so if a man wants to defend, for instance, untouchability, he has to show that it is consistent with truth. Unless he shows that, all the authorities that he may cite in support of it are to me irrelevant."

There followed a number of inconsequential questions. Gandhi gave the pundit notice that he should finish in five minutes after which he would go into silence.

"How then is untouchability in conflict with truth?" the pundit questioned.

"Well, I will show you. Is it consistent with truth to regard you as an untouchable?"

"How could I be an untouchable?" asked the pundit much surprised. "There is difference between man and man, as between the fire in a neighbour's house and the fire in the cemetery."

"I see. Then tell me why, whereas you are a touchable, I or Rajagopalachari is an untouchable?"

"There is difference between me and a *chandal* in shape, thought, action, character, etc."

But his time was up. The pundit himself wound up saying: "I have not come to argue at all. I simply wanted to have the privilege of a talk with you."

After Trichinopoly, Gandhi entered Chetti Nad, the land of the Nattukottai chettiars or Dhana-Vaishyas, a compact area of about seventy-five villages. In the midst of fabulously rich chettiars, he spent nearly a week, giving them heart-to-heart chats and never sparing them in criticism. One of the rich men of the place was his host at Kandadukathan. Gandhi repaid his hospitality with the wholesome advice of a true friend. In doing so he turned the host's house inside out, and through that single instance administered a warning to the whole community:

"What do I see and what did I see in 1921? Your houses choked with foreign furniture, your houses furnished with all sorts of things and foreign fineries. Your houses contain many things for which in this holy land of ours there should be no room whatsoever. I told you that to come here I felt both glad and sad. I tell you that I have felt oppressed with this excessive furniture. There is in the midst of it hardly any room to breathe in. Some of your pictures are hideous, not worth looking at. I recall the many restrictions that even the rich men imposed on themselves in the time of the

Mahabharata. Let us not wear our wealth so loudly as we seem to be doing here. This temperate climate of our country does not admit of this lavish display of furniture's dirt and so many millions of germs that float in the air. If you gave me a contract for furnishing all the palaces in Chetti Nad, I should give you the same things for one-tenth of the money, and give you more comfort and fresh air and secure a certificate from the best artists in India that I had furnished your houses in the most artistic manner possible. I feel that all your palaces are built anyhow, without any sense of co-operation amongst yourselves and any sense of social welfare. If you will form a union of chettiars for common welfare and for the welfare of the peasants living in your midst, you would make of Chetti Nad a fairyland that would attract all people from India towards the peace and order in which you will be living."

The criticism was taken in good part and it served as a gentle hint to hosts elsewhere to denude their rooms of their furniture and put up him in a style that would not oppress him.

By the first week of October he went further south, right down to Tuticorin, covering the districts of Madura and Ramnad and part of Tinnevelly. Rajapalyam gave a pleasant surprise. After some days of more khadi collections, he went to a place which was a busy hive with its spinners and weavers. There were no less than a thousand spinners in the area and a hundred weavers.

From Tinnevelly he went to Nagercoil and then to the northernmost end of Travancore—Alleppey. The first speech at Nagercoil was a strong denunciation of untouchability in Travancore. The second was delivered in Trivandrum after Gandhi had seen the Maharani-Regent and the junior maharani, and it was a considered exposition of the spirit of Hinduism and an exposition of satyagraha for the benefit of those who were impatient for struggle. His last speech at Alleppey, delivered after a talk with an Ezhava deputation, was an assurance and a warning to the state.

By the middle of October Gandhi was in Cochin state. Here also he was faced with the same problem as in Travancore. In a speech at Ernakulam, he said: "Where darkness visible reigns supreme, what is the use of my fixing the extent of that darkness?"

Addressing the students he said:

"In fair weather a captain would be justified in leisurely sailing along at a moderate pace, and feel that in the time to come he will

reach the goal. But our barque of Hinduism is today sailing in essentially foul and stormy weather. If we want to overtake the storm which is about to burst on us, we must take bolder risks and sail full steam ahead. It is impossible to wait and weigh in golden scales the sentiments of prejudice and superstition that have gathered round the priests who are considered to be custodians of Hinduism. In the face of the evil which every one seems to recognize, it is not possible to wait till the superstitions and prejudices have given way."

The last week of October was crowded with programmes because of his anxiety to finish the South Indian tour hurriedly in view of the Viceroy's invitation to proceed to Delhi. "That which takes me to Delhi is also hope of national service, and I felt it would be wrong not to respond to the invitation of the Viceroy."

## *For Daridranarayan*

### 1927

FROM Mangalore Gandhi travelled 1,200 miles to Delhi where he was handed a document by the Viceroy. When asked whether that was all the business, Lord Irwin said, "Yes."

The document which was made public on November 8, 1927, was an announcement regarding the Simon Commission appointed under the 1919 Act for the purpose of inquiring into the working of the system of Government.

It had a sinister history behind it. Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State for India, wrote to Lord Reading, on December 10, 1925 to advance the date of the statutory commission provided for in the Government of India Act 1919: "I should, therefore, like to receive your advice, if at any time you discern an opportunity for making this (the statutory commission) a useful bargaining counter or for further disintegrating the Swarajists."

The appointment of the commission at a date earlier than 1929, the end of the ten-year period mentioned in the Government of India Act, had been long demanded in India. The Government so far would not accede. Lord Birkenhead's hands were, however, forced by the situation in Britain. Forecast of the coming election was ominous. A Labour Government was in sight. He could not afford to "run the slightest risk that the nomination of commission should be in the hands of our successors, Colonel Wedgewood and his friends".

To combat the stubbornness of the Government in resisting the proposals for constitutional advance, the Gauhati Congress had decided to create a united front. Some prominent Muslim leaders headed by Jinnah met in Delhi and put forward what came to be known as the Muslim proposals. They were agreeable to joint electorates for the provincial and central legislatures, provided: (*a*) Sind was made into a separate province; (*b*) The North-West

Frontier and Baluchistan were treated on the same footing as the other provinces; (*c*) In the Punjab and Bengal the proportion of Muslim representation was in accordance with their population; (*d*) And in the Central Legislature it was not less than one-third of the total.

At the meeting held in October, the A.-I.C.C. passed a resolution substantially accepting the Muslim proposals. A resolution on the question of framing a constitution for India in consultation with the leaders of all parties was also adopted.

On the very eve of the announcement of the Simon Commission, *Mother India* by Katherine Mayo was published in England. The Home Member, when heckled in the Central Assembly, said that the Government of India and India Office had "no connection with the production of the book" but had extended to the writer "facilities that are extended to students of social, economic and political and other subjects, whether Indians or foreigners, who can present satisfactory credentials." Practically every newspaper in India denounced the book and it was said that Miss Mayo had been subsidized to write it in order to degrade Indians in the eyes of the world, and to prejudice her case for self-government. The most slashing comment came from the pen of Gandhi. He reviewed the book characterizing it as a "Drain Inspector's Report":

"The book is cleverly and powerfully written. The carefully chosen quotations give it the appearance of a truthful book. But the impression it leaves on my mind is that it is the report of a drain inspector sent out with the one purpose of opening and examining the drains of the country to be reported upon, or to give a graphic description of the stench exuded by the opened drains. If Miss Mayo had confessed that she had gone to India merely to open out and examine the drains of India, there would perhaps be little to complain about her compilation. But she says in effect with a certain amount of triumph, 'The drains are India.' True, in the concluding chapter there is a caution. But her caution is cleverly made to enforce her sweeping condemnation . . . The book is no doubt untruthful, be the facts stated ever so truthful. If I open out and describe with punctilious care the stench exuded from the drains of London and say 'Behold London,' my facts will be incapable of challenge, but my judgement will be rightly condemned as a travesty of truth. Miss Mayo's book is nothing better, nothing else.

"The authoress says she was dissatisfied with the literature she read about India, and so she came to India 'to see what a volunteer unsubsidized, uncommitted and unattached could observe of common things in daily human life'. After having read the book with great attention, I regret to say that I find it difficult to accept this claim. Unsubsidized she may be. Uncommitted and unattached she certainly fails to show herself in any page. We in India are accustomed to interested publications patronized—'patronized' is accepted as an elegant synonym for 'subsidized'—by the Government. If she is not subsidized, Miss Mayo is an avowed Indophobe and Anglophil, refusing to see anything good about Indians and anything bad about the British and their rule.

"She does not give one an elevated idea of western standard of judgement. Though she represents a class of sensational writers in the West, it is a class that, I flatter myself with the belief, is on the wane. There is a growing body of Americans who hate anything sensational, smart or crooked. But the pity of it is that there are still thousands in the West who delight in 'shilling shockers'. Nor are all the authoress' quotations or isolated facts truthfully stated. The book bristles with quotations torn from their contexts and with extracts which have been authoritatively challenged.

"The authoress has violated all sense of propriety by associating the poet's name with child marriage. She has done me the honour of quoting me frequently in support of her argument. Any person who collects extracts from a reformer's diary, tears them from their context and proceeds to condemn, on the strength of these, the people in whose midst the reformer has worked, would get no hearing from sane and unbiased readers or hearers. But in her hurry to see everything Indian in a bad light, she has not only taken liberty with my writings, but she has not thought it necessary even to verify through me certain things ascribed by her or others to me. In fact she has combined in her own person what we understand in India the judicial and the executive officer. She is both the prosecutor and the judge . . .

"But why am I writing this article? Not for the Indian readers but for the many American and English readers who read these pages from week to week with sympathy and attention. I warn them against believing this book. I do not remember having given the message Miss Mayo imputes to me. The only one present who

took any notes at all has no recollection of the message imputed to me. But I know what message I give every American who comes to see me: 'Do not believe papers and the catchy literature you get in America. But if you want to know anything about India, go to India as students, study India for yourself. If you cannot go, make a study of all that is written about India, for her and against her, and then form your own conclusions. The ordinary literature you get is either exaggerated vilification of India or exaggerated praise.' I warn Americans and Englishmen against copying Miss Mayo. She came not with an open mind as she claims, but with her preconceived notions and prejudices which she betrays on every page, not excluding even the introductory chapter in which she recites the claim. She came to India not to see things with her own eyes, but to gather material three-fourths of which she could as well have gathered in America. That a book like Miss Mayo's can command a large circulation furnishes a sad commentary on western literature and culture.

"I am writing this article also in the hope, be it ever so distant, that Miss Mayo herself may relent and repent of having done, I hope unconsciously, atrocious injustice to an ancient people and equally atrocious injustice to the Americans by having exploited her undoubted ability to prejudice without warrant their minds against India.

"The irony of it all is, that she has inscribed this book 'To the peoples of India'. She has certainly not written it as a reformer, and out of love. If I am mistaken in my estimate, let her come back to India. Let her subject herself to cross-examination, and if her statements escape unhurt through the fire of cross-examination, let her live in our midst and reform our lives. So much for Miss Mayo and her readers.

"I must now come to the other side of the picture. Whilst I consider the book to be unfit to be placed before Americans and Englishmen—for it can do no good to them—it is a book that every Indian can read with some degree of profit. We may repudiate the charge as it has been framed by her, but we may not repudiate the substance underlying the many allegations she has made. It is good to see ourselves as others see us. We need not even examine the motive with which the book is written. A cautious reformer may make some use of it. Let us not resent being made aware of the

dark side of the picture wherever it exists. Overdrawn her pictures of our insanitation, child marriage, etc., undoubtedly are. But let them serve as a spur to much greater effort than we have hitherto put forth in order to rid society of all cause of reproach. Whilst we may be thankful for anything good that foreign visitors may be able honestly to say of us, if we curb our anger, we shall learn, as I have certainly learnt, more from our critics than from our patrons. Our indignation which we are bound to express against the slanderous book must not blind us to our obvious imperfections and our great limitations. Our anger will leave Miss Mayo absolutely unhurt and it will only recoil upon ourselves. We too have our due share of thoughtless readers as the West has, and in seeking to disprove everything Miss Mayo has written, we shall make the reading public believe that we are a race of perfect human beings against whom nothing can be said, no one can dare say one word. The agitation that has been set up against the book is in danger of being overdone. There is no cause for fury. I would here close this review which I have undertaken with the greatest reluctance and under great pressure of work with a paraphrase of a beautiful couplet from Tulsidas:

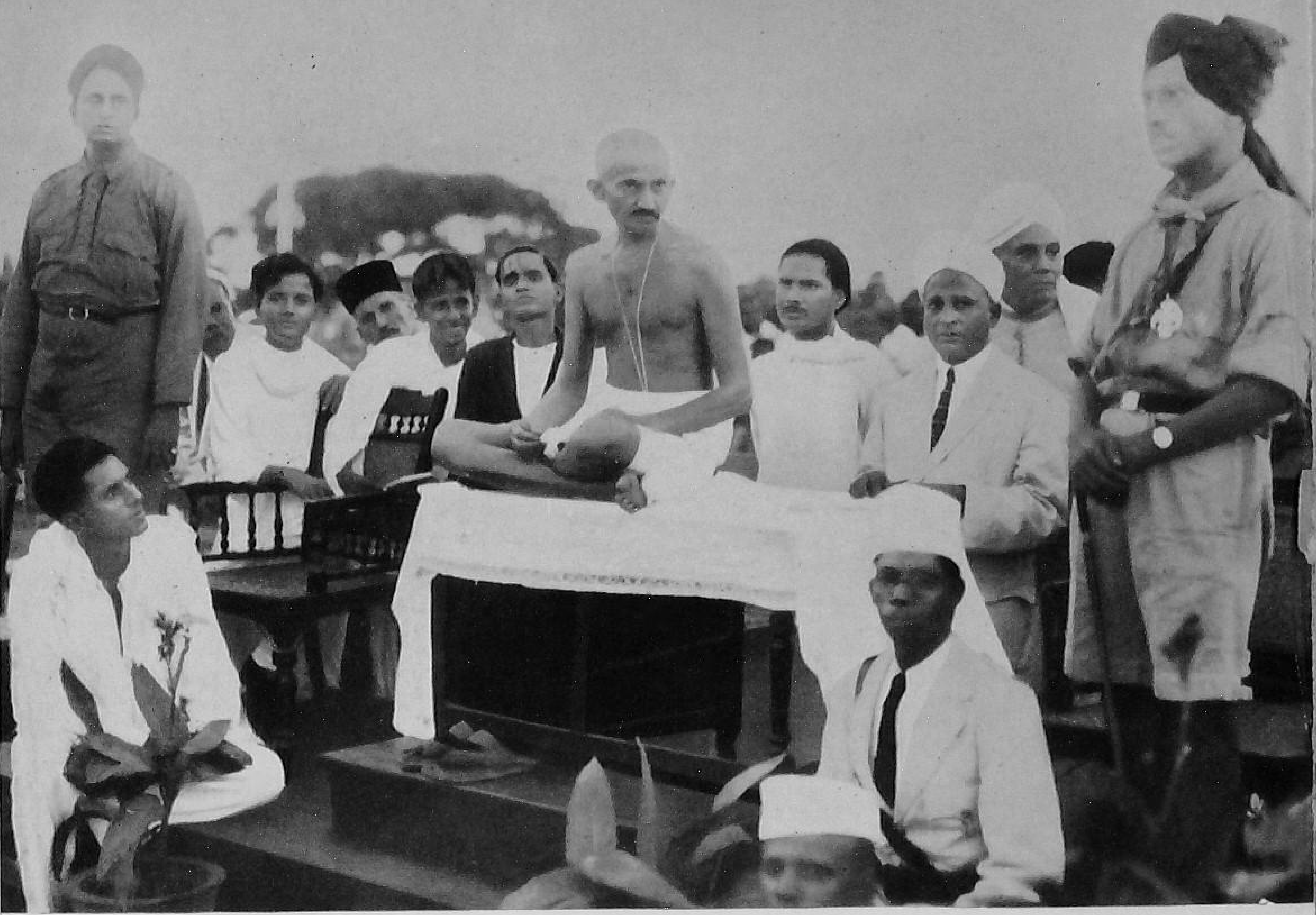
" 'Everything created by God, animate or inanimate, has its good side and bad side. The wise man, like the fabled bird which separating the cream of milk from its water helps himself to the cream leaving the water alone, will take the good from everything leaving the bad alone.' "

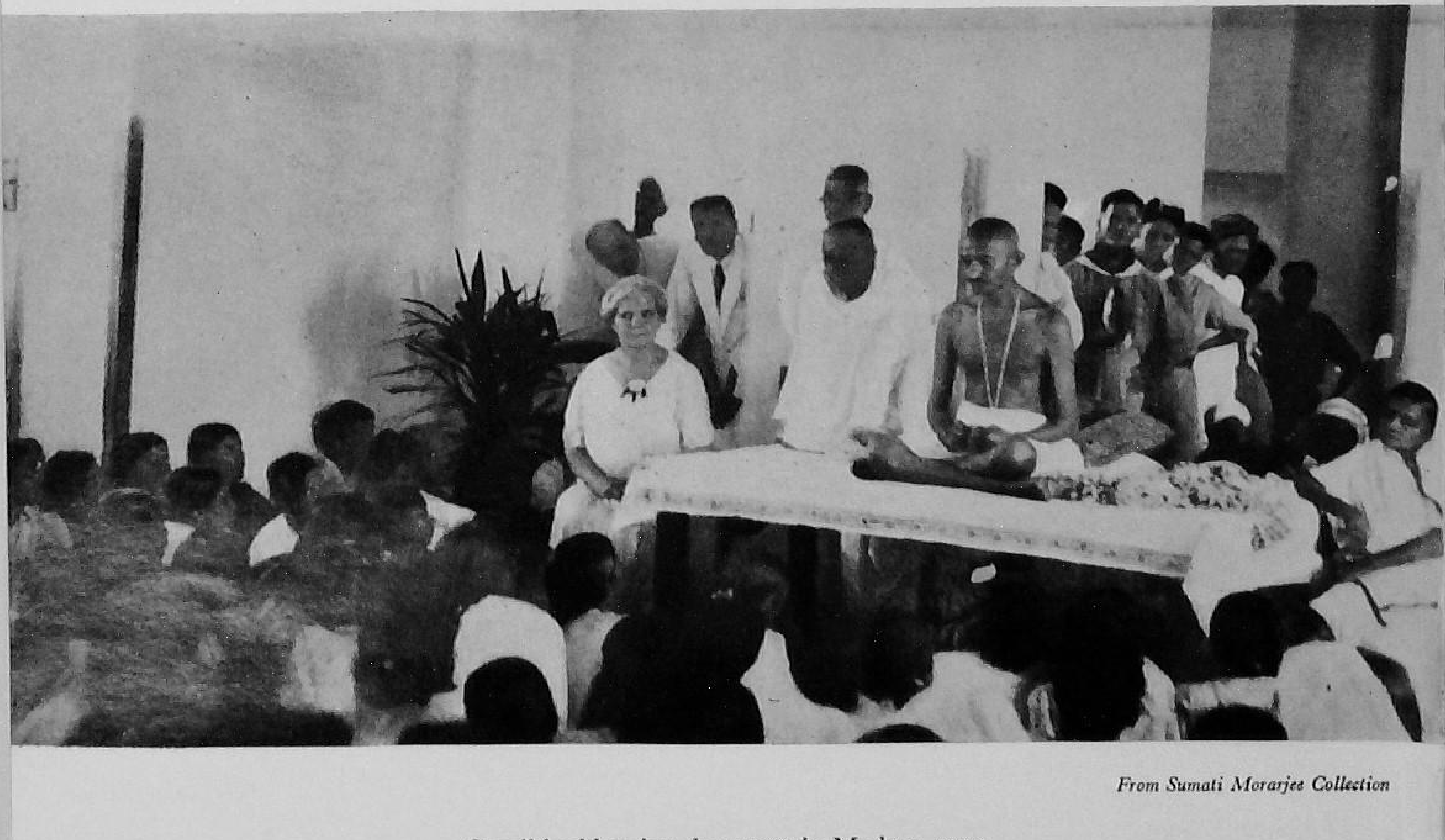
Gandhi pricked Miss Mayo's bubble but made no comment on the announcement of the Simon Commission. From Delhi he went to Ceylon in great haste. In Delhi it was difficult for him to stay and much more so to address meetings because "the old Delhi of Hakim Ajmal Khan and Swami Shraddhanand had become the new Delhi of hooligans." Some Muslims went to the extent of making a martyr out of Swami Shraddhanand's assassin by carrying his body in procession.

The receptions and welcomes that Gandhi received in Ceylon, ever since his landing in Colombo on November 13, were no less enthusiastic than the ones he received in India. He wanted to visit the beautiful island of Lanka with the object of studying living Buddhism at close quarters and, if possible, guiding a people as denationalized as his own. He also wanted to forge the ancient link

*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

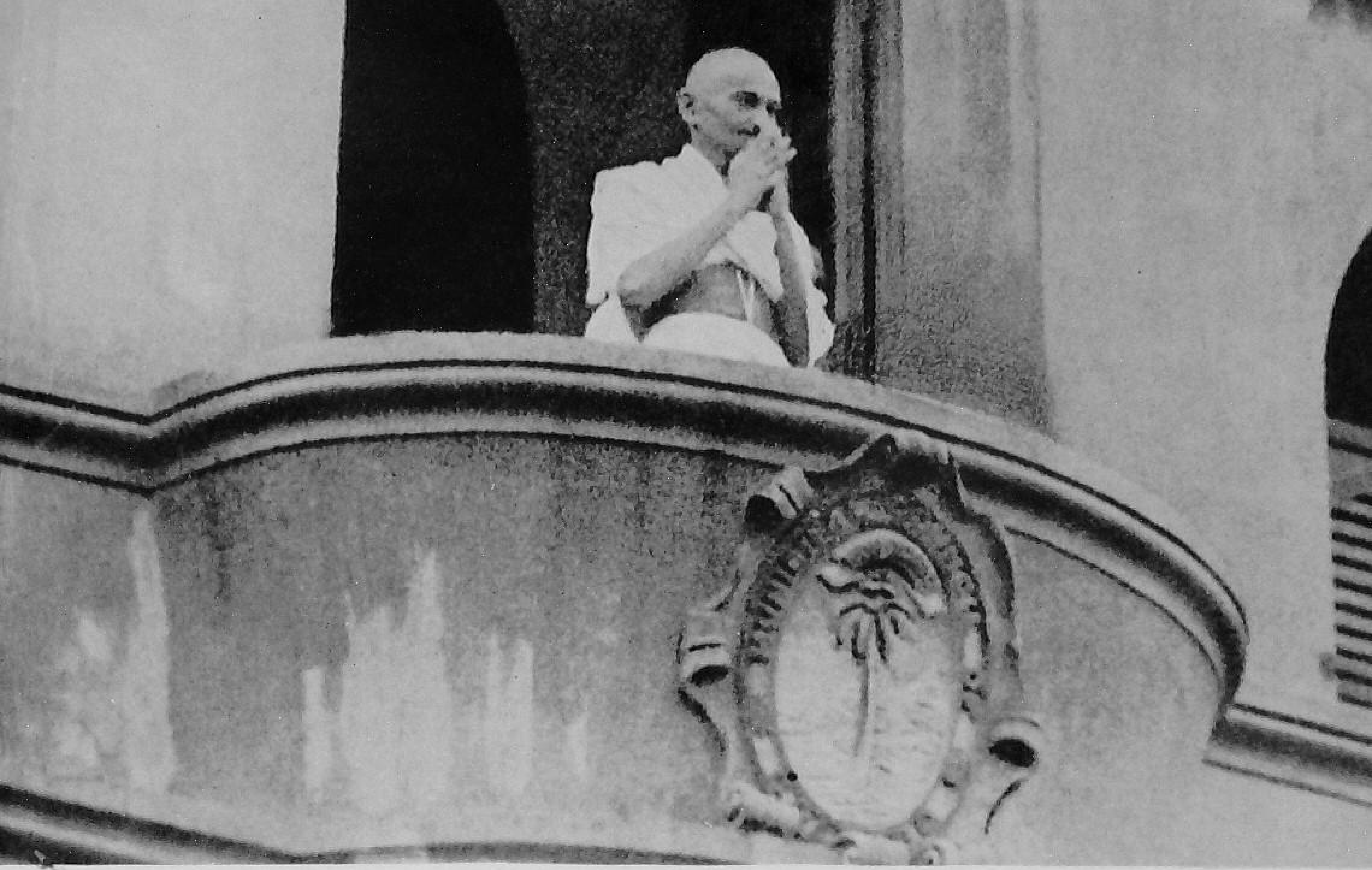
Gandhi's visit to a missionary hospital in Madras, September 1927





*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi addressing the scouts in Madras, 1927
His address to pupils of a missionary school, Madras, 1927



*Courtesy : Frank Moraes*

Gandhi greeting the citizens of Colombo from a balcony, November 1927
At a reception given by the Y.M.C.A., Colombo, November 15, 1927

*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi at the annual session of the Congress, Madras, December 1927

stronger. But the visit, when it actually came about, happened, as he said to the civic fathers in Colombo, to be a "mercenary" one. He could not digress from his programme of khadi collections.

The Buddhist and the Christian Ceylonese vied with the Hindu Ceylonese and Indians in paying tributes of welcome and giving their active sympathy for the cause that took Gandhi to Ceylon. All alike contributed their mite for the khadi fund and claimed their right to help in the cause. Part of the house where he had been put up was converted into a khadi shop, and from morning till night it was besieged by all sections of the people.

The Colombo Municipality presented him a felicitously worded address which was read by the chairman, a member of the Civil Service. The Governor of Ceylon offered Gandhi a warm welcome through his secretary and invited him for a friendly chat. Thousands thronged the thoroughfares through which he was announced to pass, and at most places crowding had to be controlled by regulating admission by tickets.

His first speech after landing in Ceylon was addressed to chettiar merchants and their clerks: "I appeal to you to open out your purses for Daridranarayan. I can conceive of no better investment for wealthy Indians, whether in India or outside, and let not your generosity end with merely giving money. If you will establish a living bond with these dumb millions, you must wear khadi which is produced by their sacred hands." With these words he began his address and in conclusion he told the wealthy chettiars as how to behave in a strange land:

"You are in what might be considered to be a strange land. Geographically and officially speaking, Ceylon is not considered part of India. You, as merchants in this hospitable land, are expected to behave towards the indigenous population in an exemplary and honest manner. By your conduct will be judged the conduct of the millions of India. I hope that your dealings with the people in this fair island are absolutely just and free from all reproach. Let your scales be absolutely correct, your accounts accurate and I hope that you regard every woman in this island as your own sister, daughter, or your mother, as the case may be. Let possession of wealth not render us giddy. It must carry with it a greater sense of responsibility, if it is to be a blessing to the possessor and those in whose midst it is earned."

He addressed several meetings on the first day. Speaking at the Vivekananda Society in Colombo he said, "If Vivekananda is the name of your society, you dare not neglect India's starving millions." Outside the hall impatient crowds were waiting to hear Gandhi. It was a huge gathering which he addressed through two interpreters simultaneously. The Ceylon labour was well organized. About twenty barbers went to Gandhi's residence with their handsome contribution of Rs. 400.

On November 15 he addressed the All-Ceylon Congress of the Buddhists attended by over 500 priests in their yellow robes. After their chanting of benediction on him, Gandhi delivered a speech summing up the message of Buddha and tried to show the ultimate unity between Buddhism and Hinduism:

"It is my deliberate opinion that the essential part of the teachings of the Buddha now forms an integral part of Hinduism. It is impossible for Hindu India now to retrace her steps and go behind the great reformation that Gautama effected in Hinduism. By his immense sacrifice, by his great renunciation and by the immaculate purity of his life, he left an indelible impress upon Hinduism, and Hinduism owes an eternal debt of gratitude to that great teacher. And if you will forgive me for saying so, and if you will also give me the permission to say so, I would venture to tell you that what Hinduism did not assimilate of what passes as Buddhism today was not essential part of Buddha's life and his teachings.

"It is my fixed opinion that Buddhism or rather the teaching of Buddha found its full fruition in India. It could not be otherwise, for Gautama was himself a Hindu of Hindus. He was saturated with the best that was in Hinduism, and he gave life to some of the teachings that were buried in the Vedas and which were overgrown with weeds. His great Hindu spirit cut its way through the forest of words, meaningless words, which had overlaid the golden truth that was in the Vedas. He made some of the words in the Vedas yield a meaning to which the men of his generation were utter strangers, and he found in India the most congenial soil.

Wherever Buddha went, he was followed by and surrounded not by non-Hindus but Hindus, those who were themselves saturated with the Vedic law.

"But Buddha's teaching like his heart was all-expanding and all-embracing and so it has survived his body and swept across the

face of the earth. At the risk of being called a follower of Buddha I claim this achievement as a triumph of Hinduism. Buddha never rejected Hinduism, but he broadened its base. He gave it a new life and a new interpretation.

"But here comes the point where I shall need your forgiveness and your generosity. I want to submit to you that the teaching of Buddha was not assimilated in its fulness whether it was in Ceylon, or in Burma, or in China or in Tibet. I know my own limitations. I lay no claim to scholarship, but I should be false to you and false to myself if I did not declare what my heart believes.

"I feel confounded to find so many inconsistencies between what I have come to understand as the central fact of Buddha's life and your own practice, and if I am not tiring you out, I would like hurriedly to run through three prominent points that just now occurred to me.

"The first is the belief in an all-pervading Providence called God. I have heard it contended times without number and I have read in books claiming to express that spirit of Buddhism, that Buddha did not believe in God. In my opinion such a belief contradicts the very central fact of Buddha's teaching. It seems to me, that has arisen over his rejection, and just rejection, of the base things that passed in his generation under the name of God. He undoubtedly rejected the notion that a being called God could be actuated by malice, could repent of his actions, and like the kings of the earth could possibly be open to temptations and bribes and could have favourites. His whole soul rose in mighty indignation against the belief that a being called God required for His satisfaction the living blood of animals in order that He might be pleased—animals who were his own creation. He reinstated God in the right place and dethroned the usurper who for the time being seemed to occupy that White Throne. He emphasized and re-declared the eternal and unalterable existence of the moral government of this universe. He unhesitatingly said that the law was God Himself.

"God's laws are eternal and unalterable and not separable from God Himself. It is an indispensable condition of His very perfection. Hence the great confusion that Buddha disbelieved in God and simply believed in the moral law. Because of this confusion about God Himself arose the confusion about the proper understanding of the great word nirvana. Nirvana is undoubtedly not

utter extinction. So far as I understand the central fact of Buddha's life, nirvana is utter extinction of all that is base in us, all that is vicious in us, all that is corrupt and corruptible in us. Nirvana is not like the black, dead peace of the grave, but the living peace, the living happiness of a soul which is conscious of itself and conscious of having found its own abode in the heart of the Eternal.

"The third point is with regard to the low estimation in which the idea of the sanctity of all life came to be held in Buddhism's travels outside India. Great as Buddha's contribution to humanity was in restoring God to His eternal place, in my opinion, greater still was his contribution to humanity in his exacting regard for all life, be it ever so low. I am aware that his own India did not rise to the height that he would fain have seen India occupy.

"But the teaching of Buddha, when it became Buddhism and travelled outside, came to mean that sacredness of animal life had not the sense that it had with an ordinary man. I am not aware of the exact practice and belief of Ceylonese Buddhism in this matter, but I am aware what shape it has taken in Burma and China. In Burma especially the Buddhists will not kill a single animal, but do not mind others killing the animals for them and dishing the carcasses for them for their food. Now, if there was any teacher in the world who insisted upon the inexorable law of cause and effect, it was Gautama, and yet my friends, the Buddhists outside India, would, if they could, avoid the effects of their own acts.

"One thing more and I shall have done. You who regard Buddha as the ruler of your hearts owe something to the land of his birth, where millions of his descendants for whom he laboured and for whom he died are today living a life of misery, living in a state of perpetual semi-starvation. I venture to suggest that khadi enables you to establish a living bond between yourselves and the ruler of your hearts. If you will follow the central fact of his teaching and regard life as one of renunciation, of renunciation of all material things, all life being transitory, you will at once see the beauty of the message of khadi which otherwise means simple living and high thinking. Taking these two thoughts with you, I suggest to every one of you to dot the i's and cross the t's and make out your own interpretation of the message of khadi."

Addressing an impressive gathering in the hall of the Y.M.C.A., Colombo, on November 15, he said that "there are some who will

not even take my flat denial when I tell them that I am not a Christian." He welcomed the occasion and expressed his thoughts on Christianity:

"The message of Jesus, as I understand it, is contained in his Sermon on the Mount unadulterated and taken as a whole, and even in connection with the Sermon on the Mount, my own interpretation of the message is in many respects different from the orthodox. The message, to my mind, has suffered distortion in the West. One's own religion is after all a matter between oneself and one's Maker and no one else's, but if I feel impelled to share my thoughts with you this evening, it is because I want to enlist your sympathy in this search for truth and because so many Christian friends are interested in my thoughts on the teachings of Jesus.

"If then I had to face only the Sermon on the Mount and my own interpretation of it, I should not hesitate to say, 'Oh yes, I am a Christian.' I have no desire myself to give you my own view of Christianity. But negatively I can tell you that to my mind of what passes as Christianity is a negation of the Sermon on the Mount. And please mark my words. I am not at the present moment speaking of Christian conduct. I am speaking of the Christian belief, of Christianity as it is understood in the West. I am painfully aware of the fact that conduct everywhere falls far short of belief. But I don't say this by way of criticism. But I am placing before you my fundamental difficulties.

"When I began as a prayerful student to study the Christian literature in South Africa, I asked myself 'Is this Christianity?' and have always got the Vedic answer, *neti neti*, not this, not this. And the deepest in me tells me that I am right.

"I claim to be a man of faith and prayer, and even if I were cut to pieces, I trust God would give me the strength not to deny Him and to assert that He is. The Muslim says He is and there is no one else. The Christian says the same and so the Hindus, and if I may say so, even the Buddhist says the same, if in different words. Thus though we may utter the same words they have not the same meaning for us all. Hence I say that we do not need to proselytize or do *shuddhi* or *tabligh* through our speech or writing. We can do it really with our lives. Let them be open books for all to study. Would that I could persuade the missionary friends to

take this view of their mission, then there would be no distrust, no suspicion, no jealousy and no dissensions."

Gandhi took modern China as a case in point. Young China regarded Christian movements as being opposed to Chinese self-expression and to him the moral of this manifestation was clear:

"Do not let your Christian propaganda be anti-national, say these young Chinese. And even their Christian friends have come to distrust the Christian endeavour that has come from the West. The deduction I would like you to draw from this manifestation is that you Ceylonese should not be torn from your moorings, and those from the West should not consciously or unconsciously lay violent hands upon the manners, customs and habits of the Ceylonese in so far as they are not repugnant to the fundamental ethics and morality. Do not confuse Jesus' teaching with what passes as modern civilization, and pray do not do unconscious violence to the people among whom you cast your lot. It is no part of that call, I assure you, to tear up the lives of the people of the East by their roots. Tolerate whatever is good in them and do not hastily, with your preconceived notions, judge them. Do not judge lest you be judged yourselves.

"In spite of your belief in the greatness of the western civilization and your pride in all your achievements, I plead with you for humility, and ask you to leave some room for doubt, in which as Tennyson sang, there was more truth, though by doubt he meant a different thing. Let us each one live our life, and if ours is the right life, where is the cause for hurry? It will react of itself."

The Y.M.C.A. had among its members Buddhists also and the president had asked him to say a word of advice to the Christian and Buddhist youth. Gandhi gave the following message:

"Do not be dazed by the splendour that comes to you from the West. Do not be thrown off your feet by this passing show. The Enlightened One has told you in never-to-be forgotten words that this span of life is but a passing shadow, a fleeting thing, and if you could realize the nothingness of all that appears before your eyes, the nothingness of this material case that we see before us ever changing, then there would be treasures for you up above, and peace for you down here, peace which passeth all understanding, and happiness to which we are utter strangers. It needs an amazing faith, a divine faith and surrender of all that we see before us.

"What did Buddha do, Christ do, and also Mahomed? Theirs were the lives of self-sacrifice and renunciation. Buddha renounced all worldly happiness because he wanted to share with the whole world his happiness which was to be had by men who sacrificed and suffered in search for truth.

"If it was good thing to scale the heights of the Mount Everest, sacrificing precious lives in order to be able to get there and make some slight observations, if it was a glorious thing to give up life after life in planting a flag in the uttermost extremities of the earth, how much more glorious would it be to give not one life, surrender not a million lives but a billion lives in search of the potent and imperishable truth?

"So do not be lifted off your feet, do not be drawn away from the simplicity of your ancestors. A time is coming when those, who are in the mad rush today of multiplying their wants vainly thinking that they add to the real substance, real knowledge of the world, will retrace their steps and say, 'What have we done?'

"Civilizations have come and gone and, in spite of our vaunted progress, I am tempted to ask again and again, 'To what purpose?' Wallace has said the same thing. Fifty years of brilliant inventions and discoveries, he has said, has not added one inch to the moral height of mankind. So said a dreamer and visionary if you will—Tolstoy. So said Jesus, and Buddha, and Mahomed, whose religion is being denied and falsified in my own country today.

"By all means drink deep of the fountains that are given to you in the Sermon on the Mount, but then you will have to take sackcloth and ashes. The teaching of the sermon was meant for every one of us. You cannot serve both God and Mammon."

His last important speech in Colombo was delivered under the auspices of the Labour Union on November 16:

"The use made by you in your address of the expression 'Mother India' has touched me to my deepest recesses. The use of that expression, in my opinion, derives great significance, because I know all of you are not Indians. Perhaps to those amongst you who are not Indians, the significance that I attach to that expression and which I shall explain to you was not before your mind's eye when you made use of the expression.

"Legend—and legend at times is superior to history—has it that a king called Rama came to Lanka to rid this island of an evil

king, and instead of exercising the rights of conquest by annexing this fair Island to India, he restored it to the brother of that evil king, called Bibhishan, and crowned him King of Lanka.

"Rendered in modern language it means that Rama, before trying the loyalty of the people of Lanka or the loyalty of King Bibhishan and putting either him or the people through a course of tutelage, gave them straight away complete self-government—dominion status.

"Many changes came about since the date assigned to the period of this legend both in this place and in India, and the two countries have undergone many vicissitudes of fortune, but the fact remains that the millions in India, even to the present day, believe in this legend more firmly than in any facts of history. And if you, people of this beautiful island, are not ashamed of owning some connection with your next-door neighbour, I would advise you to share the pride that millions of Indians have in owning this legend.

"Now you can understand why I told you that you, who are in my opinion, a daughter state did well in using the term 'Mother India' for India, when expressing your allegiance to that country.

"I would also point out to you that whether Rama of the legend ever lived on this earth or not, and whether also the ten-headed Ravana of the legend lived in Lanka or not, it is true that there is a Rama who is living today and there is also a Ravana who is living today. Rama is the sweet and sacred name in Hinduism for God and Ravana is the name given in Hindu mythology to evil, whenever evil becomes embodied in the human frame. It is the function of God Rama to destroy evil wherever it occurs and it is equally the function of God Rama to give to his devotees like Bibhishan a free charter of irrevocable self-government.

"Let us all, whether we are labourers or otherwise, seek to rid ourselves by the help of Rama within us, of the ten-headed monster of evil within us, and ask for the charter of self-government.

"And you fellow labourers, who have still to receive your due, are perhaps in special need of Rama's help and Rama's grace in order that you may rid yourselves of evil and fit yourselves for self-government.

"Do not believe it, if any one tells you that it was I who secured the comparative freedom for the indentured labourers of South Africa, or that it was I who secured freedom for the labourers of

Ahmedabad or Champaran. They secured whatever they did, because they complied with the rules, the inexorable rules, governing self-government. They won because they helped themselves.

"Let me briefly tell you what in my opinion you should do to come to your own. Combination amongst yourselves in the form of unions is undoubtedly the first. But I can tell you from experience that your every union can become one of the causes of your bondage if you do not comply with other conditions which I shall presently mention to you.

"Each of you should consider himself to be a trustee for the welfare of the rest of his fellow labourers and not be self-seeking. You must be and remain non-violent under circumstances however grave and provoking. If you will be men and realize your dignity, you must give up drink in its entirety if you are given to that cursed habit. A man under its influence becomes worse than a beast and forgets the distinction between his sister, his mother and his wife. And if you really believe me as your friend you will take the advice of this old friend of yours and shun drink as you would shun a snake hissing in front of you. A snake can only destroy the body but the curse of drink corrupts the soul within. This is much more to be feared and avoided than a snake. You should also avoid gambling if you are given to that evil habit.

"One of the things that sharply distinguishes man from beast is that man from his earliest age has recognized the sanctity of the marriage bond and regulated his life in connection with women by way of self-restraint which he has more and more imposed upon himself. If your means do not permit you to have separate and sufficient habitations so as to observe the laws of primary decency you will refuse to serve under such degrading conditions and for such insufficient wages. I would honour you as brave men if you would accept a state of utter starvation rather than that you should labour on such insufficient wages as would render it impossible for you to observe the primary laws of morality.

"I would advise you to use your union as much for internal reformation as for defence against assaults from without, and remember that while it is quite proper to insist upon your rights and privileges it is imperative that you should recognize the obligation that every right carries with it. Whilst you will insist upon adequate wages, proper humane treatment from your employees, proper

and good sanitary lodgings, you will also recognize that you should treat the business of your employers as if it were your own business and give to it your honest and undivided attention.

"Lastly, while you have done well in thinking of the more unfortunate millions of India, I would advise you to establish a living bond between them and yourselves, especially if you still consider that India is the mother state, the mother country; you will for the sake of the poor millions invest every pie or every cent that you spend on your clothing in khadi and nothing else."

After spending four days in Colombo, Gandhi motored along the coast north up to Chilaw and thence entered the hill districts near Kurunegala, finally reaching Kandy, having visited numerous places on the way. At Badulla, he said: "As I was coming today from Kandy to this place, I passed through some of the finest bits of scenery I have ever witnessed in my life. Where nature has been so beneficent and where nature provides for you such innocent intoxication, and gives you invigorating air to breathe, it is criminal for a man or woman to seek intoxication from that sparkling but deadly liquor."

The total collections, at the end of the first week, were nearly Rs. 60,000. The workers on the tea estates about Nuwara Eliya, Badulla and Hatton came to see "Gandhi Raja" and contributed their mite. Gandhi was sorry that he could not give more time to these simple folk, see them in their homes and show them how to avoid diseases. He could only leave for them the message of purity and abstinence.

In the numerous speeches that Gandhi delivered during these busy days he struck an intimate note. A gentleman at one place asked if Kasturbai was his mother, and Gandhi said, "Yes." The next morning at a public meeting at Matale, which Kasturbai did not attend, people missed her and inquired why "mother" had not come. He replied: "A gentleman did last night mistake her for my mother, and for me, as for her, it is not only a pardonable mistake but a welcome mistake. For years past she has ceased to be my wife by mutual consent. Nearly forty years ago, I became an orphan and for thirty years she has filled the place of my mother. She has been my mother, friend, nurse, cook, bottle-washer and all these things. If in the early morning of the day she had come with me to divide the honours, I should have gone without my food,

and no one would have looked after my clothing and comforts. So we have come to a reasonable understanding that I should have all the honours and she should have all the drudgery."

He ended the second week's programme with an address to the Ceylon National Congress. "In India the Congress is a word to conjure with," he said. "I, therefore, take it for granted that in adopting this name you are also following the traditions of the parent body." Then he defined what they should aim at. "Claiming, as you do, allegiance to India and endorsing as you do, your connection with the story of Ramayana, you should be satisfied with nothing but Ram Raj which includes swaraj."

During the third week Gandhi visited Moratuwa, Panadura, Horanna, Kalutara and many more places on the way to Galle and Matara—the southernmost points of Ceylon. The Sinhalese villagers who had perhaps heard his name for the first time were eagerly waiting to see him. The Tiranagama Women's Buddhist Association had a purse and an address for him though it was not in the programme. "After the lapse of centuries the touch of your saintly feet has ennobled the soil of this fair Isle of Lanka"—thus began the address and recorded with joy "the happy memory of your visit with the message of khadi and the begging bowl on behalf of the suffering brothers in our common motherland."

At Balapitiya, he was presented with an address on a palm-leaf encased in a beautiful silver casket. "The permanent population of the island have ever recognized and have never forgotten the kinship that exists between them and your countrymen," said the address and wondered why the Indians still refused the Buddhists' claims to Buddha Gaya.

At Galle the reception was practically in the hands of students and at Matara the chauffeurs' union took the lead. They organized a procession of about a hundred fantastically decorated motor-cars, read an address and presented a purse. At Akmimana he was requested to lay the foundation-stone of a weaving school for girls, and the little villages between Matara and Galle had their small purses to offer.

From the south, Gandhi returned again to Colombo, his headquarters. It had yet many meetings in store for him, and many purses too, and yet no mass meeting in the real sense of the term. The educated aristocracy of Ceylon lived in rigid isolation from

the masses. The public meeting of the Sinhalese women in Colombo was a complete disappointment to Gandhi. It was a gathering of little more than a dozen sophisticated women in the drawing-room of a stately palace. He gave them a picture of the starving millions of India, and said:

"When Mahendra came to Ceylon, the children of the motherland were not starving either materially or spiritually, our star was in the ascendent and you partook of the glory. The children are starving today and it is on their behalf that I have come with the begging bowl, and if you do not disown kinship with them, but take some pride in it, then you must give me not only your money but your jewellery as sisters in so many other places have done. My hungry eyes rest upon the ornaments of sisters, whenever I see them heavily bedecked. There is an ulterior motive in asking for ornaments, namely, to wean the women from the craze for ornaments and jewellery. If I may take the liberty that I do with other sisters, may I ask you what it is that makes woman deck herself more than man? I am told by feminine friends that she does so for pleasing man. Well, if you want to play your part in the world's affairs, you must refuse to deck yourselves for pleasing man. If I was born a woman, I would rise in rebellion against any pretension on the part of man that woman is born to be his plaything. I have mentally become a woman in order to steal into her heart. I could not steal into my wife's heart until I decided to treat her differently than I used to do, and so I restored to her all her rights by dispossessing myself of all my so-called rights as her husband. And you see her today as simple as myself. Refuse to be the slaves of your own whims and fancies, and the slaves of men. Refuse to decorate yourselves, don't go in for scents and lavender waters, if you want to give out the proper scent, it must come out of your heart, and then you will captivate, not man but humanity. It is your birthright. Man is born of woman, he is flesh of her flesh and bone of her bone. Come to your own and deliver your message again."

He concluded with these words:

"Do you know the hideous condition of your sisters on plantations? Treat them as your sisters, go among them, serve them with your knowledge of sanitation and your talents. Let your honour lie in their service. And is there not service nearer home? There are men who are rascals; drunken people who are a menace to

society. Wean them from their rascality by going amongst them as fearlessly as some of those Salvation Army girls who go into the dens of thieves, gamblers and drunkards, fall on their necks and at their feet and bring them round. That service will deck you more than the fineries that you are wearing. I will then be a trustee for the money that you will save and distribute it amongst the poor."

There were numerous meetings on the last day. In one of his speeches he left a message for all the Indians in Ceylon or in fact for the benefit of all living in a foreign country:

"The one maxim of conduct that should guide us in life is that we who come from another country must throw in our lot entirely with the people of the country of our adoption. Their welfare must be our primary concern. Our own must be subservient to theirs. That seems to be the only line consistent with dignity, and it follows along the lines of the great teaching, that we should do unto others as we wish that they should do unto us. There cannot be one law to govern the relations between ourselves and the governors who come to our land, another for us when we go to another land and, though it has given me great pleasure to hear it owned by the Sinhalese that India is their motherland, it is better to regard ourselves as foreigners when we wish to regulate our relations with them. The safest rule of conduct is to claim kinship when we want to do service and not to insist on kinship when we want to assert a right. I have applied this rule of life, which I call the golden rule of conduct, even for inter-provincial relations in India. For instance, whenever I have gone to Bengal or to the Punjab or to any other province outside Gujarat, I have not hesitated to suggest to the Gujaratis that they should consider the welfare of the provinces to which they go as superior to theirs. I know no other method of preserving sweet relations in human affairs. Wherever there is an interruption in the surveillance of this golden rule, there have been bickerings, quarrels and even breaking of heads, and I have no doubt whatsoever that if you govern your conduct according to that rule, you will cover yourselves with honour and glory, and your conduct will redound to the credit of the country from which we come and whose deliverance we are seeking with all our power."

At another place he said: "I would ask you to live as sugar lives in milk. Even as a cup of milk, which is full up to the brim, does not overflow when sugar is added to it, but the sugar accommodates

itself to the milk and enriches its taste, even so would I like you to live in this island, so as not to become interlopers, and to enrich the life of the people amongst whom you are living. Take care that none of the vices we have in India are brought with you in order to poison the life; nor must we bring with us to these shores the curse of untouchability."

On November 25, Gandhi delivered a farewell speech in Colombo, though he was to leave the shores of Ceylon on November 29 from Jaffna. When he left Colombo the collection reached Rs. 86,000. He was afraid that Jaffna might not be able to finish a lakh, but it did much more. The parting message left by him to the people of Jaffna was the message of the spinning wheel:

"I know, and I am happy to know, that you are strangers to the gnawing pauperism in India which starves the millions of India from day to day. The spinning wheel has, therefore, perhaps no economic importance for you. But I have no doubt about its great cultural value for this fair land. Its living message of simplicity is applicable to all lands, and you will admit that if your boys and girls and even grown-up men and women gave about an hour a day to spinning and became self-contained regarding their clothing requirement, it would do no harm to you but would give dignity and self-confidence to this nation. I have been watching, not without considerable anxiety, the craze for fashion which has now seized the young men belonging to the higher classes. Little do they know how by being slaves to this hypnotic dazzle from the West, they are isolating themselves from their poorest countrymen who can never adopt those fashions. I cannot help thinking that it would be a great catastrophe, a great national tragedy, if you were to barter away your simplicity for this tinsel splendour. But whether you appreciate this cultural side of the spinning wheel or not, you have from many a platform declared your allegiance to India by affectionately calling her Mother India. You have by your generous purses given tangible evidence of that allegiance. May I appeal to you to forge this link stronger and make it a living thing by finding in your wardrobes ample room for khadi."

By the first week of December, he reached Orissa. "I am glad the address has been taken as read, I wish the speech also was taken as made, though not the purse taken as given," he remarked humorously at a meeting in Banpur, where he had reached quite

exhausted. The organizers realized that they should go slow if they wanted him to go through at least a part of his Orissa tour, and the programme was cut down.

Just as he was preparing to go to Bolgarh for some rest, Banpur workers from Puri district came to inform him that the people there were being intimidated by the police. So he went to hearten the people. "Why should you fear?" he asked. "A man who is innocent of crime need not fear. And remember there would be no one to frighten you if you refused to be afraid. Do not in any case be cowed down. For fear is worse than disease. The man who fears man, falls from the estate of man. Fear God alone. I am here until two o'clock tomorrow. You can come and tell me all you have to say."

But no one approached Gandhi for fear of the police and vested interests. On December 10 he reached Bolgarh, the khadi production centre of the All-India Spinners' Association. Here too people were afraid to approach him. At Banpur a small purse was given; at Bolgarh no purse could be thought of. But at meetings coppers were freely given, and the aborigines brought a few gourds and brinjals as gifts for Gandhi. The two or three days' enforced rest that he had to take gave him an opportunity to study the conditions in Bolgarh. From here he wrote a moving account of the plight of the ryots in Orissa:

"The long deferred Orissa visit has come to fill the bitter cup of sorrow and humiliation. It was at Bolgarh, thirty-one miles from the nearest railway station, that whilst I was sitting and talking with Dinabandhu Andrews on the 11th instant, a man with a half-bent back wearing only a dirty loin-cloth came crouching in front of us. He picked up a straw and put it in his mouth and then lay flat on his face with arms outstretched and then raised himself, folded his hands, bowed, took out the straw, arranged it in his hair and was about to leave. I was writhing in agony whilst I witnessed the scene. Immediately the performance was finished, I shouted for an interpreter, asked the friend to come near and began to talk to him. He was an 'untouchable' living in a village six miles away, and being in Bolgarh for the sale of a load of faggots and having heard of me had come to see me. Asked why he should have taken the straw in his mouth, he said that was to honour me. I hung my head in shame. The price of honour seemed to me to be too great to bear. My

Hindu spirit was deeply wounded. I asked him for a gift. He searched for a copper about his waist. 'I do not want your copper, but I want you to give me something better,' I said. 'I will give it,' he replied. I had ascertained from him that he drank and ate carrion because it was the custom.

" 'The gift I want you to give me is promise never again to take the straw in your mouth for any person on earth, it is beneath man's dignity to do so; never again to drink because it reduces man to the condition of a beast, and never again to eat carrion, for it is against Hinduism and no civilized person would ever eat carrion.'

" 'But my people will excommunicate me, if I do not drink and eat carrion,' the poor man said.

" 'Then suffer excommunication and if need be leave the village.'

"This downtrodden humble man made the promise. If he keeps it, his threefold gift is more precious than the rupees the generous countrymen entrust to my care. This untouchability is our greatest shame. The humiliation of it is sinking deeper.

This never-to-be-forgotten incident was only part of the shame and sorrow. Never since the days of Champaran in 1916, have I witnessed such deathlike quiet as I did on entering political Orissa through Banpur. And I fear that the quiet of Orissa is worse than that of Champaran. There was spirit in the ryots of Champaran after a few days' stay in their midst. I doubt if the Orissa ryot would respond so quickly. I was told that the zamindars, the rajas and the local police had conspired to frighten the ryots out of coming near me. I had begun to flatter myself with the belief that the rajas, the zamindars and the pettiest police officials had ceased to distrust or fear me. The experiences of Orissa have chastened me. Being too weak to go about much, I sent my friends among the people and ascertained the cause. They brought news that people were told, on pain of punishment, not to come near me or to take part in any demonstration in my honour. Such warnings have been issued before and in other provinces, but they have had little or no effect in normal times such as those. The ryots in Orissa, however, seemed to me to be living in a perpetual state of fear and liable to be acted upon by the slightest attempt.

"This is a shame both we and the foreign rulers have to share. It is true that the rajas, zamindars and the petty officials are our own kith and kin. But the primary source of fright is in the rulers.

Their system is based on 'frightfulness'. In the name of prestige they have compelled the tallest among us to bend low. They have intensified, where they have not created, demoralization. They have known the existence of abject fear among the ryots. But they have done nothing to remove it and the causes, where they have not hugged the condition of things in the alleged interest of their rule. Whilst, therefore, they may not be directly responsible for the pathetic scenes I witnessed, they cannot be acquitted of a considerable share of responsibility for them.

"But our shame is greater. If we were strong, self-respecting and not susceptible to frightfulness, the foreign rulers would have been powerless for mischief. Those only who are susceptible to fear are frightened by others. And it has to be confessed that long before the British advent we were habituated to fear by our zamindars and rajas. The present rulers have but reduced to a science what was in existence before in a more or less crude shape. The workers in Orissa have, therefore, to reach the ryot to shed the oppressive nervous timidity bordering on cowardice. And this they will not do by swearing at the zamindar, the raja or the police officials. The latter become docile and even friendly when they find that the ryot has unlearned the unmanly habit."

"Fear," said Gandhi, "is a worse disease than malaria or kala-azar; these diseases kill the body, fear kills the soul. A fear-stricken man can never know God, and one who knows God will never fear a mortal man. Shake yourselves free of fear which threatens your very existence." With agonized heart he said at Bolgarh: "I should stay here not three days, or three months, but three years."

Ten days in Orissa were full of stress and strain. His health was broken. The programme was, therefore, lightened. He spent two days at Balasore and addressed only one public meeting. For the first time in Orissa he saw the crowds filling the air with cries of "Hari bol", and women with their *ulu* sounds.

In Cuttack, where his blood pressure rose high, practically all engagements were cancelled. However, he gave a talk to workers against his doctor's advice. The doctor called in the evening to find his patient engaged in another serious conversation. The blood pressure rose from 182 in the morning to 195 mm. in the night. The doctor gently said, "You are overstepping your limits, Mahatmaji, like all other patients." Gandhi ignored the doctor's

advice by playing with the doctor's son and relieving the child of his gold studs, saying, "Now you must do the right and proper *pranam*, as you know I am carrying pressure of 195."

From Orissa he proceeded to Madras for the annual session of the Congress which was to deliberate on its attitude towards the Simon Commission and other important issues. All the prominent Congress leaders, except Motilal Nehru, were present there. Mrs. Besant and Malaviya were there and important members of the Justice Party were seated on the dais.

Dr. Ansari, in his presidential address, summarized the Congress policy as one of co-operation for thirty-five years, non-co-operation for a year and a half, and obstruction within the councils and constitutional deadlocks for four years. "Non-co-operation did not fail us," he said, "we failed non-co-operation." He advised the Congress and the country to stand aside and have nothing to do with the Simon Commission and recommended speedy preparation of the future constitution of India and the calling of a national convention for its adoption.

Jawaharlal, who had just returned from his visit to Europe and the Soviet Union, presented a bunch of resolutions as on independence, war danger, association with the League against Imperialism, to the Working Committee and nearly all of these were adopted by the Congress. These represented a new outlook.

Gandhi attended the open session of the Congress, but he did not attend the meetings of the Working Committee of which he was a member. He took no part in the shaping of the Congress policy. The resolution on independence as well as that on the boycott of British goods were not to his liking: "The Congress stultifies itself by repeating year after year resolutions of this character when it knows that it is not capable of carrying them into effect. By passing such resolutions we make an exhibition of our impotence, become the laughing-stock of critics and involve the contempt of our adversary. The Congress cannot become the irresistible force it was and is intended to be, if its resolutions are ill-conceived and are to remain merely paper resolutions. We have almost sunk to the schoolboys' debating society."

The Congress accepted the Muslim scheme submitted by Jinnah and laid down certain rules dealing with the religious and social aspects of the problem. It recommended arbitration and abandon-

ment of all forceful means. Malaviya made a touching appeal for unity. Mahomed Ali joyfully exclaimed that the Muslims no longer wanted protection of minorities from Earl Winterton, for it could be better secured by Malaviya. One of the main clauses of the unity resolution was on the cow, and music before mosques: "Without prejudice to the rights that Hindus and Musalmans claim, the one to play music and conduct procession wherever they please and the other to slaughter cows for sacrifice or food wherever they please, the Musalmans appeal to the Musalmans to share Hindu feelings as much as possible in the matter of the cow, and the Hindus appeal to spare Musalman feelings as much as possible in the matter of music before mosques."

The All-India Liberal Federation under the presidentship of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru decided that it should have nothing to do with the Simon Commission, "at any stage, to any extent or in any form". The Hindu Mahasabha also adopted a resolution urging boycott of the Simon Commission.

The Muslim League split into two parts this year—one part under Sir Mahomed Shafi, meeting in Lahore, whilst the accredited session which followed Jinnah met at Calcutta. A resolution welcoming the Simon Commission was passed at Lahore, whilst a resolution boycotting the commission was adopted by the Calcutta session of the League. It was decided there to appoint a committee to take up with the Congress and other political oganizations the work of drafting the constitution and of suggesting the necessary safeguards.

Before the year ended Hakim Ajmal Khan died. In his demise the Congress suffered a heavy loss. Steeped as he was in the culture of imperial Delhi of Mogul days, he respected and loved equally Hindus and Muslims. Gandhi said: "Though he is no longer in the flesh with us, his spirit shall be ever with us and calls us even now to a faithful discharge of our duty, and no memorial that we can raise to perpetuate his memory can be complete until we have achieved real Hindu-Muslim unity."

## *Back To Ashram*

1928

For over a year Gandhi had travelled incessantly and it was with a feeling of relief that he returned to Sabarmati ashram in 1928. Soon after his return some members of the Federation of International Fellowship, hailing from America, England, Switzerland, Russia and Sweden, met in the ashram. During the conference Gandhi summed up his views: "After long study and experience I have come to these conclusions that: (1) all religions are true; (2) all religions have some error in them; (3) all religions are almost as dear to me as Hinduism. My veneration for other faiths is the same as for my own faith. Consequently, the thought of conversion is impossible. Our prayer for others ought never to be: 'God, give them the light thou hast given to me.' But: 'Give them all the light and truth they need for their highest development.' "

At the end of January he celebrated the wedding of his third son, Ramdas, at the ashram. The engagement had taken place nearly two years before, but Gandhi would not consent to the marriage until the bride had finished her seventeenth year. Ramdas was thirty. Before the ceremony, which began at eight in the morning, the bride and groom fasted, cleaned the well-basin and the cow-shed, watered the trees to symbolize unity with the whole creation, engaged themselves in hand-spinning and read a chapter of the Gita. Both were dressed in spotless white khadi and had no ornament on their persons. The ceremony, lasting ninety minutes, mainly consisted of a vow of faithfulness and dedication to service taken by the pair before the sacrificial fire, in the presence of the elders. There was no drum beating or music and nothing like a wedding party or dinner. Only a few friends were present. There were no wedding gifts except the gift of a *mangal mala*, a copy of the Gita and *Ashram Bhajanavali* and two *taklis* from Gandhi and a spinning wheel by the bride's mother.

At 9.30 a.m. all gathered together and Gandhi blessed the couple in a solemn speech. He was nearly moved to tears as he referred to Ramdas and Devadas as two of his sons who had been brought up exclusively by him and under his care. The consciousness that the son had never deceived him choked him with a feeling of grateful pride. "You have confessed your faults to me, but they have never alarmed me, for your frank confession has exonerated you in my eyes. I am glad that you would rather be deceived by the whole world than deceive any one. May you live always in the same truthful way.

"You will guard your wife's honour and be not her master, but her true friend. You will hold her body and her soul as sacred as I trust she will hold your body and your soul. To that end you will have to live a life of prayerful toil, simplicity and self-restraint. Let not either of you regard another as the object of lust.

"You have both had part of your training here. Let your lives be consecrated to the service of the motherland, and toil away until you wear out your bodies. We are pledged to poverty. You will both earn your bread in the sweat of your brow as poor people do. You will help each other in daily toil and rejoice in it.

"I have given you no gifts. I can give none except a pair of *taklis* and copies of my dearly beloved Gita and *Bhajanavali*. Let the cotton garlands be a shield of protection for you. Could I have procured rich gifts for you from friends, the world would have ridiculed my conceit, but today it will bear testimony that I have given you only such things as become one in my position.

"Let the Gita be to you a mine of diamonds, as it has been to me, let it be your constant guide and friend on life's way. May God give you a long life of service."

In the evening Gandhi dwelt upon the pernicious system which had divided the four original *varnas* into numerous castes and sub-castes and hoped that the wedding just celebrated would perhaps be for the ashram the last as between the parties belonging to the same caste. It behoved people in the ashram to take the lead and to discountenance marriages between parties of the same caste and to encourage those between parties belonging to different sub-castes. He wished girls could be kept unmarried up to the age of twenty and even twenty-five. Towards the end he explained the solemn significance of the ceremony.

"Do not think that the ashram has as its object the popularization of marriage. It has and will have the promotion of lifelong brahmacharya as its object. It countenances marriage only to the extent that it serves as an instrument of restraint rather than of indulgence. Remember that there is a limit to self-indulgence but none to self-restraint, and let us daily progress in that direction."

The tours scheduled for February and March had been cancelled to enable Gandhi to take rest at Sabarmati. It did not mean lack of activity. Among the many problems that he had to face in the ashram, one was that of malaria which visited regularly every year after the end of the monsoon. Doctors could not suggest anything beyond the usual means of protection, a mosquito-net. "How can all afford a mosquito-net? Is there no means which the poorest can afford?" asked Gandhi. The doctors suggested that the body be properly covered and the face be smeared with kerosene oil. He usually sheltered himself under a mosquito-net but as soon as he saw that there was a poor man's remedy, he discarded the net and took to smearing his face with kerosene oil before bedtime. "The Kingdom of Heaven is for those who are poor in spirit," said Gandhi at one of his prayer meetings. "Let us, therefore, learn at every step to reduce our needs and wants to the terms of the poor and try to be truly poor in spirit."

The evening discourse, whenever he gave one, was devoted to topics arising out of the everyday life of the inmates. The morning ones were almost always about some thought from the Gita. There was no elaborate comment but just a few words or sentences on the chapter recited, to serve as a sort of approach to the chapter. For instance, "Chapter nine contains what I would describe as the healing balm for us afflicted mortals, afflicted not only with physical ills, but with ills of the spirit. It contains the promise of God to all erring mortals, nay, even to those who may be 'born from the very womb of sin'. Those that turn to Him shall have no cause to grieve. The chapter also shows that the Gita was written when Varnashram had ceased to exist in its pristine purity and had come to mean a classification of high and low. Let us forget that, and remember that the promise is given to all, even if they be steeped in sin. And we are all steeped in sin, more or less, who dare cast the stone at whom? 'Be thou certain, none can perish, trusting me,' says the Lord, but let it not be understood to mean

that our sins will be washed away by merely trusting Him without any striving. Only he who struggles hard against the allurements of sense objects, and turns in tears to the Lord will be comforted.

"Chapter fourteen and the threefold division of the qualities of nature remind me of Henry Drummond's book I read about thirty years ago, *The Natural Law in the Spiritual World.* The laws are many but they have been broadly classified under three heads. The fourteenth chapter describes the laws to which man is subject and the fifteenth describes Purushottama, the Perfect Man. The 'ascent of man' is what we have to learn from these chapters. There is no man who is governed exclusively by one of the three *gunas: satva, rajas* or *tamas.* We have each of us to rise to a state in which we are governed predominantly by the *satva* principle, until at last we rise beyond the three and are Perfect Man. I can think of an illustration from the physical world. Take water, which in its solid state remains on the earth; it cannot ascend until it is rarefied into steam. But once it is rarefied into steam, it rises up in the sky where at last it is transformed into clouds which drop down in the form of rain and fructify and bless the earth. We are all like water, we have to strive so to rarefy ourselves that all the ego in us perishes and we merge in the Infinite to the eternal good of all."

The object of the Gita appeared to Gandhi to be that of showing the most excellent way to attain self-realization:

"That matchless remedy is renunciation of fruits of action.

"This is the centre round which the Gita is woven. This renunciation is the central sun, round which devotion, knowledge and the rest revolve like planets. The body has been likened to a prison. There must be action where there is body. Not one embodied being is exempted from labour. And yet all religions proclaim that it is possible for man, by treating the body as the temple of God, to attain freedom. Every action is tainted, be it ever so trivial. How can the body be made the temple of God? In other words how can one be free from action, that is, from the taint of sin? The Gita has answered the question decisively: 'By desireless action; by renouncing fruits of action; by dedicating all activities to God, that is, by surrendering oneself to Him body and soul.'

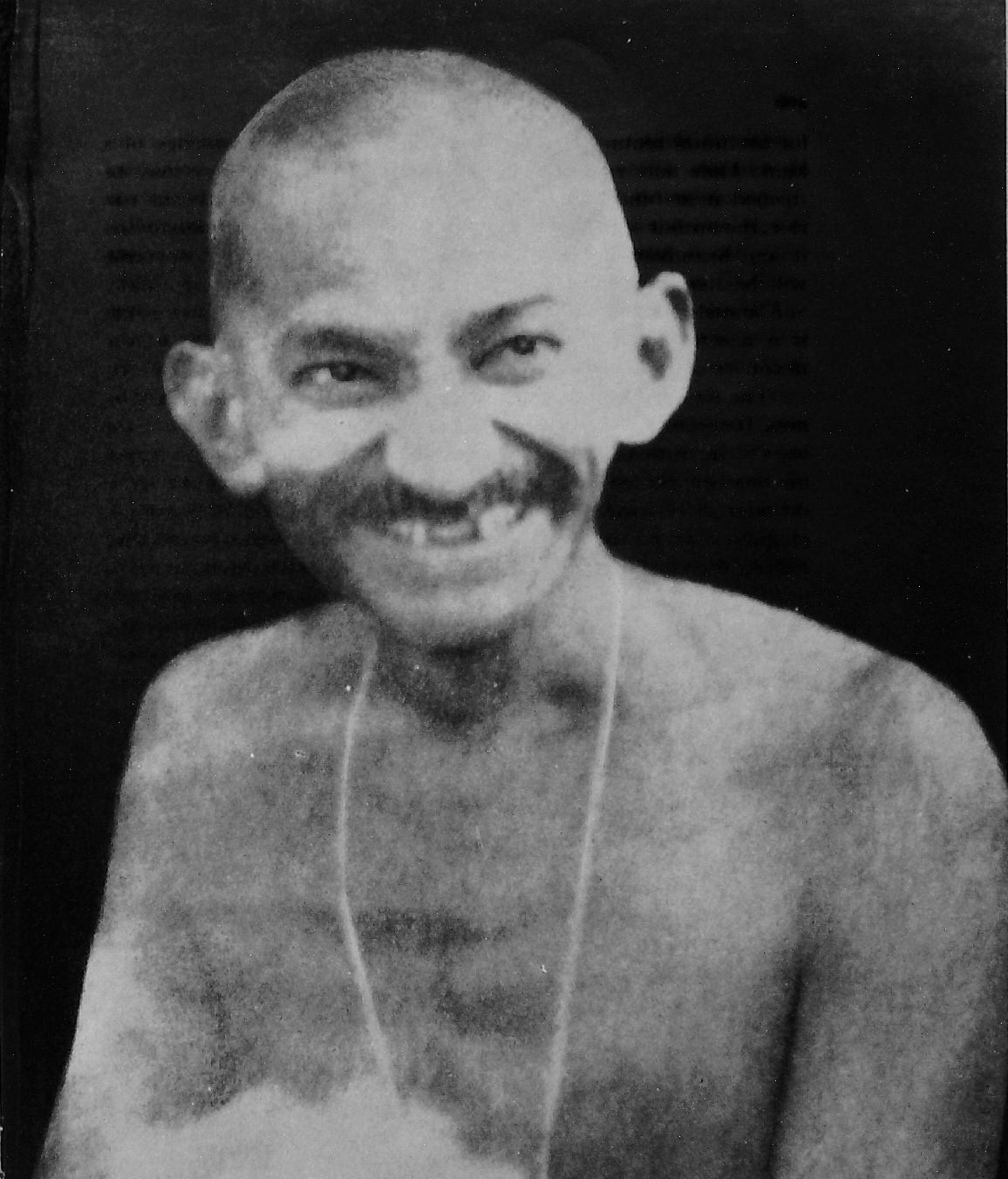
"But desirelessness or renunciation does not come for the mere talking about. It is not attained by an intellectual feat. It is attainable only by a constant heart-churn. Right knowledge is necessary

for attaining renunciation. Learned men possess a knowledge of a kind. They may recite the Vedas from memory, yet they may be steeped in self-indulgence. In order that knowledge may not run riot, the author of the Gita has insisted on devotion accompanying it and has given it the first place. Knowledge without devotion will be like a misfire. Therefore, says the Gita, 'Have devotion, and knowledge will follow.' This devotion is not mere lip-worship, it is a wrestling with death. Hence the Gita's assessment of the devotee's qualities is similar to that of the sage's.

"The devotion required by the Gita is no soft-hearted effusiveness. It certainly is not blind faith. The devotion of the Gita has the least to do with externals. A devotee may use, if he likes, rosaries, forehead marks, make offerings, but these things are no test of his devotion. He is the devotee who is jealous of none, who is a fount of mercy, who is without egotism, who is selfless, who treats alike cold and heat, happiness and misery, who is ever forgiving, who is contented, whose resolutions are firm, who has dedicated mind and soul to God, who causes no dread, who is not afraid of others, who is free from exultation, sorrow and fear, who is pure, who is versed in action and yet remains unaffected by it, who renounces all fruit, good or bad, who treats friend and foe alike, who is untouched by respect or disrespect, who is not puffed up by praise, who does not go under when people speak ill of him, who loves silence and solitude, who has a disciplined reason. Such devotion is inconsistent with the existence at the same time of strong attachments.

"We thus see, that to be a real devotee is to realize oneself. Self-realization is not something apart. One rupee can purchase for us poison or nectar, but knowledge or devotion cannot buy us either salvation or bondage. These are not media of exchange. They are themselves the thing we want. In other words, if the means and the end are not identical, they are almost so. The extreme of means is salvation. Salvation of the Gita is perfect peace.

"But such knowledge and devotion, to be true, have to stand the test of renunciation of fruits of action. Mere knowledge of right and wrong will not make one fit for salvation. According to common notions a mere learned man will pass as a pundit. He need not perform any service. He will regard it as bondage even to lift a little *lota*. Where one test of knowledge is non-liability for service, there is no room for such mundane work as the lifting of a *lota*.

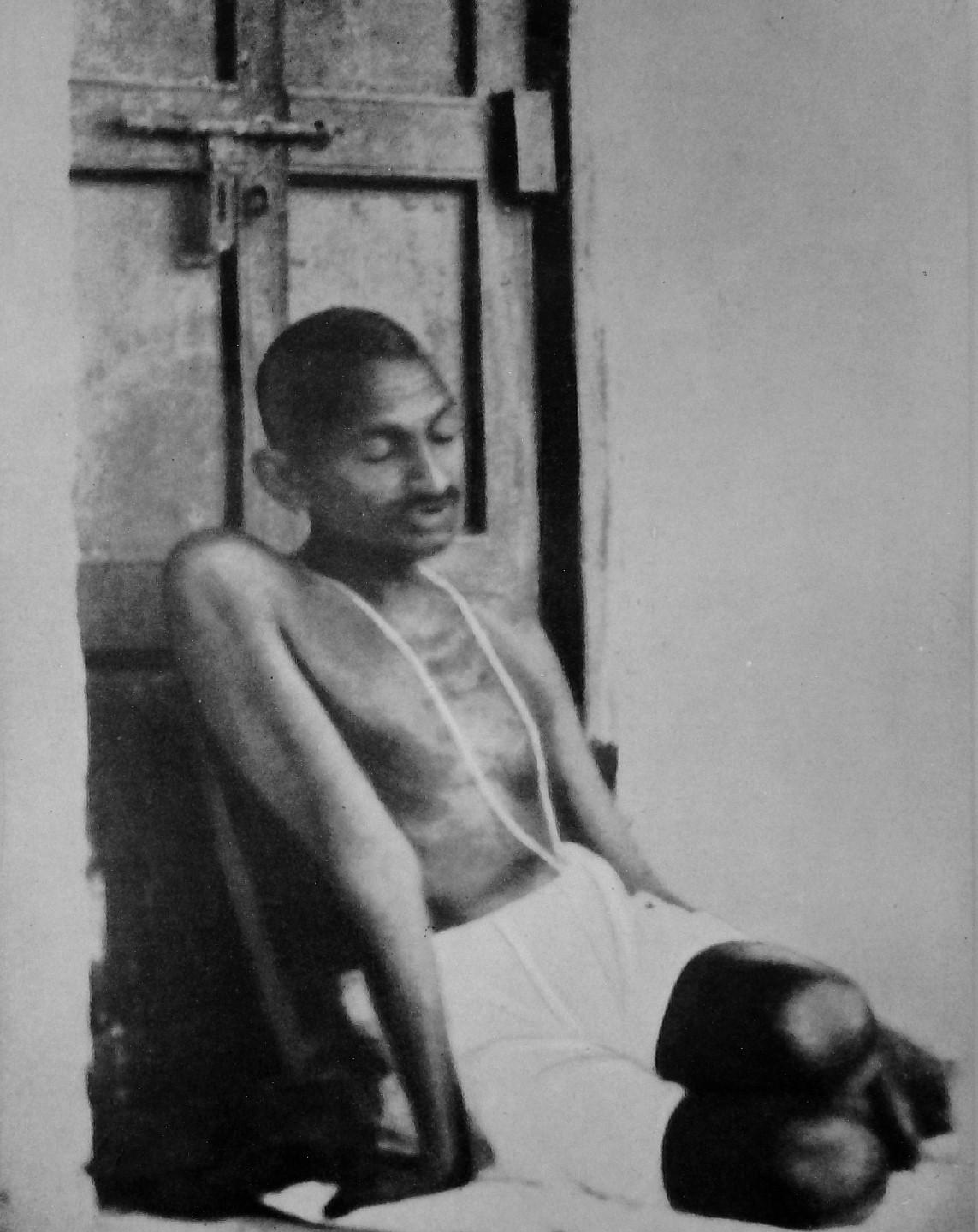


From Sumati Morarjee Collection

Gandhi, aged 59

*Courtesy: Shantu Dani*

From Vidyapith to Sabarmati Ashram, Gandhi cycled for the first time since his South African days, to reach evening prayers in time, 1928



From Sumati Morarjee Collection

At prayers in the ashram

*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi on the ashram grounds, 1928

"Or take *bhakti*. The popular notion of *bhakti* is soft-heartedness, telling beads and the like, and disdaining to do even a loving service, lest the telling of beads, etc., might be interrupted. This *bhakti*, therefore, leaves the rosary only for eating, drinking and the like, never for grinding corn or nursing patients.

"But the Gita says: 'No one has attained his goal without action. Even men like Janaka attained salvation through action. If even I were lazily to cease working, the world would perish. How much more necessary then for the people at large to engage in action?'

"While on the one hand it is beyond dispute that all action binds, on the other hand it is equally true that all living beings have to do some work whether they will or no. Here all activity, whether mental or physical, is to be included in the term action. Then how is one to be free from the bondage of action, even though he may be acting? The manner in which the Gita has solved the problem is, to my knowledge, unique. The Gita says, 'Do your allotted work but renounce its fruit—be detached and work—have no desire for reward and work.'

"This is the unmistakable teaching of the Gita. He who gives up action falls. He who gives up the reward rises. But renunciation of fruit in no way means indifference to the result. In regard to every action one must know the result that is expected to follow, the means thereto, and the capacity for it. He, who, being thus equipped, is without desire for the result, and is yet wholly engrossed in the due fulfilment of the task before him, is said to have renounced the fruits of his action.

"Again, let no one consider renunciation to mean want of fruit for the renouncer. The reading of the Gita does not warrant such a meaning. Renunciation means absence of hankering after fruit. As a matter of fact, he who renounces reaps a thousandfold. The renunciation of the Gita is the acid test of faith. He who is ever brooding over result often loses nerve in the performance of his duty. He becomes impatient and then gives vent to anger and begins to do unworthy things; he jumps from action to action, never remaining faithful to any. He who broods over results is like a man given to the objects of senses; he is ever distracted, he says good-bye to all scruples, everything is right in his estimation and he, therefore, resorts to means whether fair or foul to attain his end.

"From the bitter experiences of desire for fruit the author of the Gita discovered the path of renunciation of fruit, and put it before the world in a most convincing manner. The common belief is that religion is always opposed to material good. 'One cannot act religiously in mercantile and such other matters. There is no place for religion in such pursuits; religion is only for attainment of salvation,' we hear many worldly-wise people say. In my opinion the author of the Gita has dispelled this delusion. He has drawn no line of demarcation between salvation and worldly pursuits. On the contrary, he has shown that religion must rule even our worldly pursuits. I have felt that the Gita teaches us that what cannot be followed out in day-to-day practice cannot be called religion. Thus, according to the Gita, all acts that are incapable of being performed without attachment are taboo. This golden rule saves mankind from many a pitfall. According to this interpretation murder, lying, dissoluteness and the like must be regarded as sinful and, therefore, taboo. Man's life then becomes simple, and from that simpleness springs peace.

"Thinking along these lines, I have felt that in trying to enforce in one's life the central teaching of the Gita, one is bound to follow truth and ahimsa. When there is no desire for fruit, there is also no temptation for untruth or himsa. Take any instance of untruth or violence, and it will be found that at its back was the desire to attain the cherished end. But it may be freely admitted that the Gita was not written to establish ahimsa. It was an accepted and primary duty even before the Gita age. The Gita had to deliver the message of renunciation of fruit. This is clearly brought out as early as the second chapter.

"But if the Gita believed in ahimsa or it was included in desirelessness, why did the author take a warlike illustration? When the Gita was written, although people believed in ahimsa, wars were not only not taboo, but nobody observed the contradiction between them and ahimsa.

"In assessing the implications of renunciation of fruit, we are not required to probe the mind of the author of the Gita as to his limitations of ahimsa and the like. Because a poet puts a particular truth before the world, it does not necessarily follow that he has known or worked out all its great consequences, or that having done so, he is able always to express them fully. In this perhaps lies

the greatness of the poem and the poet. A poet's meaning is limitless. Like man, the meaning of great writings suffers evolution. On examining the history of languages, we notice that the meaning of important words has changed or expanded. This is true of the Gita. The author has himself extended the meanings of some current words. We are able to find this even on a superficial examination. It is possible that, in the age prior to that of the Gita, offering of animals in sacrifice was permissible. But there is not a trace of it in the sacrifice in the Gita sense. In the Gita continuous concentration on God is the king of sacrifices. The third chapter seems to show that sacrifice chiefly means body labour for service. The third and the fourth chapters read together will give us other meanings for sacrifice, but never animal sacrifice. Similarly has the meaning of the word *sanyasa* undergone, in the Gita, a transformation. The *sanyasa* of the Gita will not tolerate complete cessation of all activity. The *sanyasa* of the Gita is all work and yet no work. Thus the author of the Gita, by extending meanings of words, has taught us to imitate him. Let it be granted, that according to the letter of the Gita it is possible to say that warfare is consistent with renunciation of fruit. But after forty years' unremitting endeavour fully to enforce the teaching of the Gita in my own life, I have, in all humility, felt that perfect renunciation is impossible without perfect observance of ahimsa in every shape and form.

"The Gita is not an aphoristic work; it is a great religious poem. The deeper you dive into it, the richer the meanings you get. It being meant for the people at large, there is pleasing repetition. With every age, the important words will carry new and expanding meanings. But its central teaching will never vary. The seeker is at liberty to extract from this treasure any meaning he likes so as to enable him to enforce in his life the central teaching.

"Nor is the Gita a collection of do's and don'ts. What is lawful for one may be unlawful for another. What may be permissible at one time, or in one place, may not be so at another time, and in another place. Desire for fruit is the only universal prohibition. Desirelessness is obligatory.

"The Gita has sung the praises of knowledge, but it is beyond the mere intellect; it is essentially addressed to the heart and capable of being understood by the heart. Therefore, the Gita is not for those who have no faith. The author makes Krishna say: 'Do not entrust

this treasure to him who is without sacrifice, without devotion, without the desire for this teaching and who denies Me. On the other hand, those who will give this precious treasure to My devotees will, by the fact of this service, assuredly reach Me. And those who, being free from malice, will with faith absorb this teaching, shall, having attained freedom, live where people of true merit go after death.' "

He shared his spiritual views with the readers of *Young India.* In reply to critics, he wrote under "God Is":

"There is an indefinable mysterious Power that pervades everything. I feel it, though I do not see it. It is this unseen Power which makes itself felt and yet defies all proof, because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my senses. It transcends the senses.

"But it is possible to reason out the existence of God to a limited extent. Even in ordinary affairs we know that people do not know who rules or why and how he rules. And yet they know that there is a power that certainly rules. In my tour in Mysore I met many poor villagers and I found upon inquiry that they did not know who ruled Mysore. They simply said some god ruled it. If the knowledge of these poor people was so limited about their ruler, I who am infinitely lesser in respect to God than they to their ruler need not be surprised if I do not realize the presence of God, the King of Kings. Nevertheless I do feel as the poor villagers felt about Mysore that there is orderliness in the universe, there is an unalterable law governing everything and every being that exists or lives. It is not a blind law; for no blind law can govern the conduct of living beings and thanks to the marvellous researches of Sir J. C. Bose, it can now be proved that even matter is life. That Law, then, which governs all life is God. Law and the Lawgiver are one. I may not deny the Law or the Lawgiver, because I know so little about It or Him. Even as my denial or ignorance of the existence of an earthly power will avail me nothing, so will not my denial of God and His Law liberate me from its operation; whereas humble and mute acceptance of divine authority makes life's journey easier even as the acceptance of earthly rule makes life under it easier.

"I do dimly perceive that whilst everything around me is ever changing, ever dying, there is underlying all that change a living power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves, and recreates. That informing power or spirit is God. And

since nothing else that I see merely through the senses can or will persist, He alone is.

"And is this power benevolent or malevolent? I see it as purely benevolent. For I can see that in the midst of death life persists, in the midst of untruth truth persists, in the midst of darkness light persists. Hence I gather that God is Life, Truth, Light. He is Love. He is the supreme Good.

"But He is no God who merely satisfies the intellect, if He ever does. God to be God must rule the heart and transform it. He must express Himself in every smallest act of His votary. This can only be done through a definite realization more real than the five senses can ever produce. Sense perceptions can be, often are, false and deceptive, however real they may appear to us. Where there is a realization outside the senses it is infallible. It is proved not by extraneous evidence but in the transformed conduct and character of those who have felt the real presence of God within.

"Such testimony is to be found in the experiences of an unbroken line of prophets and sages in all countries and climes. To reject this evidence is to deny oneself.

"This realization is preceded by an immovable faith. He who would in his own person test the fact of God's presence can do so by a living faith. And since faith itself cannot be proved by extraneous evidence, the safest course is to believe in the moral government of the world and, therefore, in the supremacy of the moral law, the law of truth and love. Exercise of faith will be the safest where there is a clear determination summarily to reject all that is contrary to truth and love.

"I confess that I have no argument to convince through reason. Faith transcends reason. All I can advise is not to attempt the impossible. I cannot account for the existence of evil by any rational method. To want to do so is to be co-equal with God. I am, therefore, humble enough to recognize evil as such. And I call God long-suffering and patient precisely because He permits evil in the world. I know that He has no evil in Him and yet if there is evil, He is the author of it and yet untouched by it.

"I know, too, that I shall never know God if I do not wrestle with and against evil, even at the cost of life itself. I am fortified in the belief by my own humble and limited experience. The purer I try to become, the nearer I feel to be to God. How much more should

I be, when my faith is not a mere apology, as it is today, but has become as immovable as the Himalayas and as white as the snows on their peaks?"

Gandhi had been in poor health, and now he was compelled to take a respite from the more arduous public duties. He took part only in reorganizing some of the activities of the Gujarat Vidyapith. He utilized his leisure to renew the simple dietetic experiments, "a hobby of a lifetime", which had absorbed much of his attention in South Africa. In the course of these renewed experiments his health again broke down, but he continued his "most important activity" under the guidance and observation of medical experts. His health caused much anxiety to many of his friends; the papers published alarming reports. Some journals even wrote that he predicted his death by March 12, and consequently he was in a despondent mood. It was stated that he was his own astrologer. Gandhi said: "I know nothing of the science of astrology and I consider it to be a science, if it is a science, of doubtful value, to be severely left alone by those who have any faith in Providence. Nor am I in despondent mood, despondency being foreign to my nature. What precisely, however, did happen was this. When I was convicted six years ago and was asked what I thought about the prospects of swaraj, I said that it was likely that there was the hand of God in the limit of six years and that during that time either we should win swaraj or that I should die and that six years' time was long enough time for the country to win freedom. I never attached any importance to it beyond this that I should leave no stone unturned to contribute, so far as an individual could, to the attainment of our freedom. I remain unaffected in spite of the approaching termination of six years which, by the by, is not the 12th of March but the 17th of March next. Not only am I not preparing for the imminent approach of the dissolution of my body, but I am making every effort to put it in as good order as is possible. Nothing depends upon the death of an individual, be he ever so great, but much depends upon the freedom of India. Let us forget individuals and concentrate upon attaining that precious freedom."

In April he suffered an irreparable loss in the death of Maganlal Gandhi. In a moving tribute, he wrote:

"He whom I had singled out as heir to my all is no more. Maganlal K. Gandhi, a grandson of an uncle of mine, had been

with me in my work since 1904. Maganlal's father has given all his boys to the cause. The deceased went early this month to Bengal, contracted high fever whilst he was on duty in Bihar and died in Patna after an illness of nine days.

"Maganlal Gandhi went with me to South Africa in 1903 in the hope of making a bit of a fortune. But hardly had he been storekeeping for one year, when he responded to my call to self-imposed poverty, joined the Phoenix Settlement and never once faltered or failed after so joining me. If he had not dedicated himself to the country's service his undoubted abilities and indefatigable industry would have made him a merchant prince. Put in a printing-press he easily and quickly mastered the secrets of the art of printing. Though he had never before handled a tool or a machine, he found himself at home in the engine room, the machine room and at the compositor's desk. He was equally at ease with the Gujarati editing of *Indian Opinion.* Since the Phoenix scheme included domestic farming, he became a good farmer. His was, I think, the best garden at the settlement. It may be of interest to note that the very first issue of *Young India* published in Ahmedabad bears the marks of his labours when they were much needed.

"He had a sturdy constitution which he wore away in advancing the cause to which he had dedicated himself. He closely studied and followed my spiritual career and when I presented to my co-workers brahmacharya as a rule of life even for married men in search of Truth, he was the first to perceive the beauty and the necessity of the practice, and though it cost him to my knowledge a terrific struggle, he carried it through to success, taking his wife along with him by patient argument instead of imposing his views on her.

"When satyagraha was born, he was in the forefront. He gave me the expression which I was striving to find to give its full meaning to what the South African struggle stood for, and which for want of a better term I allowed to be recognized by the very insufficient, even misleading term 'passive resistance'. I wish I had the beautiful letter he then wrote to me giving his reasons for suggesting the name. He argued out the whole philosophy of the struggle step by step and brought the reader irresistibly to his chosen name. The letter, I remember, was incredibly short and to the point as all his communications always were.

"During the struggle he was never weary of work, shirked no task and by his intrepidity he infected every one around him with courage and hope. When every one went to gaol, when at Phoenix courting imprisonment was like a prize to be won at my instance, he stayed back in order to shoulder a much heavier task. He sent his wife to join the women's party.

"On our return to India, it was he again who made it possible to found the ashram in the austere manner in which it was founded. Here he was called to a newer and more difficult task. He proved equal to it. Untouchability was a very severe trial for him. Just for one brief moment his heart seemed to give way. But it was only for a second. He saw that love had no bounds.

"He was my hands, my feet and eyes. The world knows so little of how much my so-called greatness depends upon the incessant toil and drudgery of silent, devoted, able and pure workers, men as well as women. And among them, Maganlal was to me the greatest, the best and the purest.

"As I am penning these lines, I hear the sobs of the widow bewailing the death of her husband. Little does she realize that I am more widowed than she. And but for a living faith in God, I should become a raving maniac for the loss of one who was dearer to me than my sons, who never once deceived me or failed me, who was a personification of industry, who was the watch-dog of the ashram in all its aspects—material, moral and spiritual. His life is an inspiration for me, a standing demonstration of the efficacy and the supremacy of the moral law. In his own life he proved for me not for a few days, not for a few months, but for twenty-four long years—now, all too short—that service of the country, service of humanity and self-realization or knowledge of God are synonymous terms.

"Maganlal is dead, but he lives in his work whose imprints he who runs may read on every particle of dust in the ashram."

Maganlal's death was a severe blow to Gandhi: "And now the death of my best comrade seems to keep me rooted to the ashram." He announced that his "much-talked-of visit" to Europe was not to come off in 1928 at any rate:

"To those in Austria, Holland, England, Scotland, Denmark, Sweden, Germany and Russia, who had sent me kind invitations I can only say that their disappointment will be no greater than that of mine.

"Somehow or other I dread a visit to Europe and America. Not that I distrust the peoples of these great continents any more than I distrust my own, but I distrust myself. I have no desire to go to the West in search of health or for sightseeing. I have no desire to deliver public speeches. I detest being lionized. I wonder if I shall ever again have the health to stand the awful strain of public speaking and public demonstrations. If God ever sent me to the West, I should go there to penetrate the hearts of the masses, to have quiet talks with the youth of the West and have the privilege of meeting kindred spirits—lovers of peace at any price save that of truth.

"But I feel that I have as yet no message to deliver personally to the West. I believe my message to be universal but as yet I feel that I can best deliver it through my work in my own country. If I can show visible success in India, the delivery of the message becomes complete. If I came to the conclusion that India had no use for my message, I should not care to go elsewhere in search of listeners even though I still retained faith in it. If I ventured out of India, I should do so because I have faith, though I cannot demonstrate it to the satisfaction of all, that the message is being received by India be it ever so slowly.

"Thus whilst I was hesitatingly carrying on the correspondence with friends who had invited me, I saw that there was need for me to go to Europe, if only to see Romain Rolland. Owing to my distrust of myself over a general visit, I wanted to make my visit to that wise man of the West the primary cause of my journey to Europe. I, therefore, referred my difficulty to him and asked him in the frankest manner possible whether he would let me make my desire to meet him the primary cause of my visit to Europe. He says that in the name of truth itself, he will not think of letting me go to Europe if a visit to him is to be the primary cause. He will not let me interrupt my labours here for the sake of our meeting. Apart from this visit, I felt within me no imperative call. I regret my decision but it seems to be the correct one. For whilst there is no urge within to go to Europe, there is an incessant call within for so much to do here.

"But I may say to the friends in Europe, that next year, if all is well and if they still will have me, I shall try to undertake the postponed tour, under the strict limitations mentioned by me and this I shall do whether I am ready to deliver my message or not. To see my numerous friends face to face will be no small privilege.

Let me conclude this personal explanation by saying that if ever I am privileged to visit the West, I shall go there without changing dress or habits, save in so far as the climate may require a change and self-imposed restrictions may permit. My outward form is, I hope, an expression of the inward."

Gandhi's visit to Europe was to coincide with the centenary celebrations of Tolstoy, but it was not to be so. He, however, delivered his message on the teachings of Tolstoy:

"Personally I do not believe in *shraddha* ceremony as commonly understood among us in India; although I remember having performed *shraddha* at a time, I have given up the practice long since, for, I believe that the only true way of celebrating the *shraddha* of one's ancestors is constantly to ponder over and translate into daily life their good qualities.

"It was forty years back, when I was passing through a severe crisis of scepticism and doubt, that I came across Tolstoy's book, *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, and was deeply impressed by it. I was at that time a believer in violence. Its reading cured me of my scepticism and made me a firm believer in ahimsa. What has appealed to me most in Tolstoy's life is that he practised what he preached and reckoned no cost too great in his pursuit of truth. Take the simplicity of his life, it was wonderful. Born and brought up in the midst of luxury and comfort of a rich aristocratic family, blessed in an abundant measure with all the stores of the earth that desire can covet, this man who had fully known all the joys and pleasures of life turned his back upon them in the prime of his youth and afterwards never once looked back.

"He was the most truthful man of this age. His life was a constant endeavour, an unbroken tide of striving to seek the truth, and to practise it as he found it. He never tried to hide truth or tone it down but set it before the world in its entirety without equivocation or compromise, undeterred by the fear of any earthly power.

"He was the greatest apostle of non-violence that the present age has produced. No one in the West, before him or since, has written and spoken on non-violence so fully or insistently and with such penetration and insight as he. I would even go further and say that his remarkable development of this doctrine puts to shame the present-day narrow and lop-sided interpretation put upon it by the votaries of ahimsa in this land of ours. In spite of India's proud

claim of being the *Karmabhumi*, the land of realization, and in spite of some of the greatest discoveries in the field of ahimsa that our ancient sages have made, what often goes by the name of ahimsa among us today is a travesty of it. True ahimsa should mean a complete freedom from ill will and anger and hate and an overflowing love for all. For inculcating this true and higher type of ahimsa amongst us, Tolstoy's life with its ocean-like love should serve as a beacon light and a never-failing source of inspiration. Tolstoy's critics have sometimes said that his life was a colossal failure, that he never found his ideal, the mystical green stick, in whose quest his entire life was passed. I do not hold with these critics. True, he himself said so. But that only shows his greatness. It may be that he failed fully to realize his ideal in life, but that is only human. No one can attain perfection while he is in the body for the simple reason that the ideal state is impossible so long as one has not completely overcome his ego, and ego cannot be wholly got rid of so long as one is tied down by shackles of the flesh. It was a favourite saying of Tolstoy that the moment one believes that he has reached his ideal, his further progress stops and his retrogression begins and that the very virtue of an ideal consists in that it recedes from us the nearer we go. To say, therefore, that Tolstoy on his own admission failed to reach his ideal does not detract a jot from his greatness, it only shows his humility.

"Much has been often sought to be made of the so-called inconsistencies of Tolstoy's life; but they were more apparent than real. Constant development is the law of life, and a man who always tries to maintain his dogmas in order to appear consistent drives himself into a false position. That is why Emerson said that foolish consistency was the hobgoblin of little minds. Tolstoy's so-called inconsistencies were a sign of his development and his passionate regard for truth. He often seemed inconsistent because he was continuously outgrowing his own doctrines. His failures were public, his struggles and triumphs private. The world saw only the former, the latter remained unseen probably by Tolstoy himself most of all. His critics tried to make capital out of his faults, but no critic could be more exacting than he was with regard to himself. Ever on the alert for his shortcomings, before his critics had time to point at them, he had already proclaimed them to the world magnified a thousandfold and imposed upon himself the

penance that seemed to him necessary. He welcomed criticism even when it was exaggerated and like all truly great men dreaded the world's praise. He was great even in his failures and his failures give us a measure not of the futility of his ideals but of his success.

"The third great point was a doctrine of 'bread labour', that every one was bound to labour with his body for bread and most of the grinding misery in the world was due to the fact that men failed to discharge their duties in this respect. He regarded all schemes to ameliorate the poverty of the masses by the philanthropy of the rich, while they themselves shirked body labour and continued to live in luxury and ease, as hypocrisy and a sham, and suggested that if only man got off the backs of the poor, much of the so-called philanthropy would be rendered unnecessary.

"And with him to believe was to act. So in the afternoon of his life, this man who had passed all his days in the soft lap of luxury took to a life of toil and hard labour. He took to boot-making and farming at which he worked hard for full eight hours a day. But his body labour did not blunt his powerful intellect; on the contrary, it rendered it all the more keen and resplendent and it was in this period of his life that his most vigorous book—*What is Art?*—which he considered to be his masterpiece, was written in the intervals saved from the practice of his self-chosen vocation.

"Literature, full of the virus of self-indulgence, and served out in attractive forms, is flooding our country from the West and there is the greatest need for our youth to be on their guard. The present is for them an age of transition of ideals and ordeals; the one thing needful for the world, its youth and particularly the youth of India in this crisis, is Tolstoy's progressive self-restraint, for it alone can lead to true freedom for themselves, the country and the world. It is we ourselves, with our inertia, apathy and social abuse, that more than England or anybody else block our way to freedom. And if we cleanse ourselves of our shortcomings and faults, no power on earth can even for a moment withhold swaraj from us. . . The three essential qualities of Tolstoy's life mentioned by me are of the utmost use to the youth in this hour of the world's trial."

The problem of an ailing calf and mischievous monkeys at the ashram arose. There were painful days of hesitation and debate but at last Gandhi made up his mind; the principle of humanity triumphed over a sacred taboo. There was a great commotion in

orthodox circle and he critically examined the question under the title "The Fiery Ordeal":

"An attempt is being made at the ashram to run a small model dairy and tannery on behalf of the Goseva Sangh. Its work in this connection brings it up, at every step, against intricate moral dilemmas that would not arise but for the keenness to realize the ideal of seeking truth through the exclusive means of ahimsa.

"For instance, some days back a calf having been maimed lay in agony in the ashram. Whatever treatment and nursing was possible was given to it. The surgeon whose advice was sought in the matter declared the case to be past help and past hope. The suffering of the animal was so great that it could not even turn its side without excruciating pain.

"In these circumstances I felt that humanity demanded that the agony should be ended by ending life itself. The matter was placed before the whole ashram. At the discussion, a worthy neighbour vehemently opposed the idea of killing even to end pain. The ground of his opposition was that one has no right to take away life which one cannot create. His argument seemed to me to be pointless here. It would have point, if the taking of life was actuated by self-interest. Finally in all humility but with the clearest of convictions I got in my presence a doctor kindly to administer the calf a quietus by means of a poison injection. The whole thing was over in less than two minutes.

"I knew that public opinion especially in Ahmedabad would not approve of my action and that it would read nothing but himsa in it. But I know too that performance of one's duty should be independent of public opinion. I have all along held that one is bound to act according to what to one appears to be right, though it may appear wrong to others. And experience has shown that that is the only correct course. That is why the poet has sung: 'The pathway of love is the ordeal of fire, the shrinkers turn away from it.' The pathway of ahimsa, that is, of love one has often to tread all alone.

"The question may legitimately be put to me: would I apply to human beings the principle I have enunciated in connection with the calf? Would I like it to be applied in my own case? My reply is 'yes'; the same law holds good in both the cases. The law, 'as with one so with all', admits of no exceptions, or the killing of the calf was wrong and violent. In practice, however, we do not

cut short the sufferings of our ailing dear ones by death because, as a rule, we have always means at our disposal to help them and they have the capacity to think and decide for themselves. But supposing that in the case of an ailing friend, I am unable to render any aid and recovery is out of the question and the patient is lying in an unconscious state in the throes of agony then I would not see any himsa in putting an end to his suffering by death.

"Just as a surgeon does not commit himsa but practises the purest ahimsa when he wields his knife, one may find it necessary, under certain imperative circumstances, to go a step further and sever life from the body in the interest of the sufferer. It may be objected that whereas the surgeon performs his operation to save the life of the patient, in the other case we do just the reverse. But on a deeper analysis it will be found that the ultimate object sought to be served in both the cases is the same, namely, to relieve the suffering soul within from pain. In the one case you do it by severing the diseased portion from the body, in the other you do it by severing from the soul the body that has become an instrument of torture to it. In either case it is the relief of the soul from pain that is aimed at, the body without the life within being incapable of feeling either pleasure or pain. Other circumstances can be imagined in which not to kill would spell himsa, while killing would be ahimsa. Suppose, for instance, that I find my daughter, whose wish at the moment I have no means of ascertaining, is threatened with violation and there is no way by which I can save her, then it would be the purest form of ahimsa on my part to put an end to her life and surrender myself to the fury of the incensed ruffian.

" The trouble with our votaries of ahimsa is that they have made of ahimsa a blind fetish and put the greatest obstacle in the way of the spread of true ahimsa in our midst. The current—and, in my opinion mistaken—view of ahimsa has drugged our conscience and rendered us insensible to a host of other and more insidious forms of himsa like harsh words, harsh judgements, ill will, anger, spite and lust of cruelty; it has made us forget that there may be far more himsa in the slow torture of men and animals, the starvation and exploitation to which they are subjected out of selfish greed, the wanton humiliation and oppression of the weak and the killing of their self-respect that we witness all around us today than in mere benevolent taking of life. Does any one doubt for a moment that it

would have been far more humane to have summarily put to death those who in the infamous lane of Amritsar were made by their torturers to crawl on their bellies like worms? If any one desires to retort by saying that these people themselves today feel otherwise, that they are none the worse for crawling, I shall have no hesitation in telling him that he does not know even the elements of ahimsa. There arise occasions in a man's life when it becomes his imperative duty to meet them by laying down his life; not to appreciate this fundamental fact of man's estate is to betray an ignorance of the foundation of ahimsa. For instance, a votary of truth would pray to God to give him death to save him from a life of falsehood. Similarly a votary of ahimsa would on bent knees implore his enemy to put him to death rather than humiliate him or make him do things unbecoming the dignity of a human being. As the poet has sung: 'The way of the Lord is meant for heroes, not for cowards.'

"It is this fundamental misconception about the nature and the scope of ahimsa, this confusion about the relative values, that is responsible for our mistaking mere non-killing for ahimsa and for the fearful amount of himsa that goes on in the name of ahimsa in our country. Look at our pinjrapoles and goshalas, many of them represent today so many dens of torture to which as a sop of conscience we consign the hapless and helpless cattle. If they could only speak they would cry out against us and say, 'Rather than subject us to this torture give us death.' I have often read this mute appeal in their eyes.

"To conclude then, to cause pain or wish ill to or to take the life of any living being out of anger or a selfish intent is himsa. On the other hand, after a calm and clear judgement to kill or cause pain to a living being from a pure selfless intent may be the purest form of ahimsa. Each such case must be judged individually and on its own merits. The final test as to its violence or non-violence is after all the intent underlying the act.

"I now come to the other crying problem that is confronting the ashram today. The monkey nuisance has become very acute and an immediate solution has become absolutely necessary. The growing vegetables and fruit trees have become a special mark of attention of this privileged fraternity and are now threatened with utter destruction. In spite of all our efforts we have not yet been able to find an efficacious and at the same time non-violent remedy

for the evil. Let me hasten to assure the reader that no monkey has so far been killed in the ashram, nor has any monkey been wounded by means of 'arrows' or otherwise as imagined by the correspondent. Attempts are undoubtedly being made to drive them away and harmless arrows have been used for the purpose.

"The idea of wounding monkeys to frighten them away seems to me unbearable though I am seriously considering the question of killing them in case it should become unavoidable. But this question is not so simple or easy as the previous one.

"I see a clear breach of ahimsa even in driving away monkeys, and the breach would be proportionately greater if they have to be killed. For any act of injury done from self-interest, whether amounting to killing or not, is doubtless himsa.

"All life in the flesh exists by some himsa. And hence the highest religion has been defined by a negative word ahimsa. The world is bound in a chain of destruction. In other words himsa is an inherent necessity for life in the body. That is why a votary of ahimsa always prays for ultimate deliverance from the bondage of flesh.

"None, while in the flesh, can thus be entirely free from himsa because one never completely renounces the will to live. Of what use is it to force the flesh merely if the spirit refuses to co-operate? You may starve unto death but if at the same time the mind continues to hanker after objects of the sense, your fast is a sham and a delusion. What then is the poor helpless slave to the will to live to do? How is he to determine the nature and the extent of himsa he must commit? Society has no doubt set down a standard and absolved the individual from troubling himself about it to that extent. But every seeker after truth has to adjust and vary the standard according to his need and to make a ceaseless endeavour to reduce the circle of himsa. But the peasant is too much occupied with the burden of his hard and precarious existence to have time or energy to think out these problems for himself, and the cultured class instead of helping him chooses to give him the cold shoulder. Having become a peasant myself, I have no clear-cut road to go by and must chalk out a path for myself and possibly for fellow peasants. And the monkey nuisance being one of the multitude of ticklish problems that stare the farmer in the face, I must find out some means by which the peasant's crops can be safeguarded against it with the minimum amount of himsa.

"I am told that the farmers of Gujarat employ special watchmen whose very presence scares away the monkeys and saves the peasant from the necessity of killing them. That may be, but it should not be forgotten that whatever efficacy this method might have, it is dependent upon some measure of destruction at some time or other. These cousins of ours are wily and intelligent beings. The moment they discover that there is no real danger for them, they refuse to be frightened even by gun shots and only gibber and howl the more when shots are fired. Let nobody, therefore, imagine that the ashram has not considered or left any method of dealing with the nuisance untried. But none of the methods that I have known up to now is free from himsa."

"The Fiery Ordeal" brought down upon Gandhi the ire of many incensed critics. He argued:

"Truth to me is infinitely dearer than the 'mahatmaship' which is purely a burden. It is my knowledge of my limitations and my nothingness which has so far saved me from the oppressiveness of 'mahatmaship'. I am painfully aware of the fact that my desire to continue life in the body involves me in constant himsa, that is why I am becoming growingly indifferent to this physical body of mine. For instance, I know that in the act of respiration I destroy innumerable invisible germs floating in the air. But I do not stop breathing. The consumption of vegetables involves himsa but I cannot give them up. Again, there is himsa in the use of antiseptics, yet I cannot bring myself to discard the use of disinfectants like the kerosene, to rid myself of the mosquito pest and the like. I suffer snakes to be killed in the ashram when it is impossible to catch and put them out of harm's way. I even tolerate the use of the stick to drive the bullocks in the ashram. Thus there is no end of himsa which I directly and indirectly commit. And now I find myself confronted with this monkey problem. Let me assure the reader that I am in no hurry to take the extreme step of killing them. In fact I am not sure that I would at all be able finally to make up my mind to kill them. But I cannot promise that I shall never kill the monkeys even though they may destroy all the crop in the ashram. If as a result of this confession of mine, friends choose to give me up as lost I would be sorry, but nothing will induce me to try to conceal my imperfections in the practice of ahimsa. All I claim for myself is that I am ceaselessly trying to understand the implications

of great ideals like ahimsa and to practice them in thought, word and deed and that not without a certain measure of success as I think. But I know that I have a long distance yet to cover in this direction."

He shocked the orthodoxy by recommending the killing of rabid dogs. "To kill these dogs does, in my opinion, amount to himsa, but I believe it to be inevitable, if we are to escape much greater himsa. Every dog should be owned and a collar attached to it. I should suggest a dog licence. Every stray dog should be caught by the police and immediately handed to the *mahajan*, if they have adequate provision for the maintenance of these dogs. Failing such provision, all stray dogs should be shot. This, in my opinion, is the most humanitarian method of dealing with the dog nuisance which everybody feels but nobody cares or dares to tackle. But such indifference is itself himsa, and a votary of ahimsa cannot afford to neglect or shirk questions, be they ever so trifling, if these demand a solution in terms of ahimsa. We should arrive at a proper understanding of the great doctrine only by boldly facing them, even at the risk of committing serious blunders."

Gandhi's reasoning did not assuage the wrath of the orthodox Hindus. A heated controversy lasted for months. He was asked to retire from the field of ahimsa. He said: "Whether I should retire or not from the field of ahimsa, or for the matter of that from any other field, is essentially and solely for me to judge. A man can give up a right, but he may not give up a duty without being guilty of a grave dereliction."

## *New Impulse*

1928

The year 1928 was politically a full year, with plenty of activity all over the country. But Gandhi confined himself to the precincts of Sabarmati ashram. He worked in silence, rarely appearing in any public function. He put forward his point of view in *Young India* dated January 12, 1928:

"It is said that the Independence resolution is a fitting answer to Lord Birkenhead. And if this be a serious contention, we have little notion of the answer that we should make to the appointment of the Statutory Commission and the circumstances attending the announcement of the appointment. The act of appointment needs, for an answer, not speeches however heroic they may be, not declarations however brave they may be, but corresponding action adequate to the act of the British minister, his colleagues and his followers. Supposing the Congress had passed no resolution whatsoever but had made a bonfire of every yard of foreign cloth in its possession, and induced a like performance on the part of the whole nation, it would have been some answer, though hardly adequate, to what the act of appointment means. If the Congress could have brought about a strike of every Government employee beginning with the Chief Judges and ending with peons, not excluding soldiers, that act would have been a fairly adequate answer. It would certainly have disturbed the comfortable equanimity with which the British ministers and those concerned are looking upon all our heroics.

"It may be said this is merely a counsel of perfection which I should know is not capable of execution. I do not hold that view. Many Indians who are not speaking today are undoubtedly preparing in their own manner for the happy day when every Indian now sustaining the system of Government, which holds the nation in bondage, will leave the denationalizing service. It is contended that it is courage, it is undoubtedly wisdom, to restrain the tongue

whilst one is unprepared for action. Mere brave speech without action is letting of useless steam. Even the strongest speech shed bravery when in 1920 patriots learnt to court imprisonment for strong speeches. Speech is necessary for those who are dumbstruck. Restraint is necessary for the garrulous. The English administrators chaff us for our speech and occasionally betray by their acts their contempt of our speeches and thereby tell us more effectively than by words 'Act if you dare'. Till we can take up the challenge every single threatening speech or gesture of ours is a humiliation, an admission of impotence. I have seen prisoners in chains spitting frothy oaths only to provide mirth for their gaolers.

"Moreover, has independence suddenly become a goal in answer to something offensive that some Englishman has done? Do men conceive their goals in order to oblige people or to resent their action? I submit that if it is a goal, it must be declared and pursued irrespective of the acts or threats of others.

"Let us, therefore, understand what we mean by independence. England, Russia, Spain, Italy, Turkey, Chili, Bhutan have all their independence. Which independence do we want? I must not be accused of begging the question. For, if I were told that it is Indian independence that is desired, it is possible to show that no two persons will give the same definition. The fact is, that we do not know our distant goal. It will be determined not by our definitions but by our acts, voluntary and involuntary. If we are wise, we will take care of the present and the future will take care of itself. God has given us only a limited sphere of action and a limited vision. Sufficient unto the day is the good thereof.

"I submit that swaraj is an all-satisfying goal for all time. We the English-educated Indians often unconsciously make the terrible mistake of thinking that the miscroscopic minority of the English-speaking Indians is the whole of India. I defy any one to give for independence a common Indian word intelligible to the masses. Our goal at any rate may be known by an indigenous word understood by the three hundred millions. And we have such a word in swaraj, first used in the name of the nation by Dadabhai Naoroji. It is infinitely greater than and includes independence. It is a vital word. It has been sanctified by the noble sacrifices of thousands of Indians. It is a word which if it has not penetrated the remotest corner of India has at least got the largest currency of any similar

word. It is a sacrilege to displace that word by a foreign importation of doubtful value. This Independence resolution is perhaps the final reason for conducting Congress proceedings in Hindustani and that alone. No tragedy like that of the Independence resolution would then have been possible. The most valiant speakers would then have ornamented the native meaning of the word swaraj and attempted all kinds of definitions, glorious and inglorious. Would that the independents would profit by their experience and resolve henceforth to work among the masses for whom they desire freedom and taboo English speech in its entirety in so far as mass meetings, such as the Congress are concerned.

"Personally I crave not for 'independence', which I do not understand, but I long for freedom from the English yoke. I would pay any price for it. I would accept chaos in exchange for it. For the English peace is the peace of the grave. Anything would be better than this living death of a whole people. This satanic rule has wellnigh ruined this fair land materially, morally and spiritually. I daily see its law courts denying justice and murdering truth. I have just come from terrorized Orissa. This rule is using my own countrymen for its sinful sustenance. I have a number of affidavits swearing that in Khurda district acknowledgements of enhancement of revenue are being forced from the people practically at the point of the bayonet. The unparalleled extravagance of this rule has demented the rajas and the maharajas who, unmindful of consequences, ape it and grind their subjects to dust. In order to protect its immoral commerce this rule regards no means too mean, and in order to keep three hundred millions under the heels of a hundred thousand it carries a military expenditure which is keeping millions in a state of semi-starvation and polluting thousands of mouths with intoxicating liquor.

"But my creed is non-violence under all circumstances. My method is conversion, not coercion; it is self-suffering, not the suffering of the tyrant. I know that method to be infallible. I know that a whole people can adopt it without accepting it as its creed and without understanding its philosophy. People generally do not understand the philosophy of all their acts. My ambition is much higher than independence. Through the deliverance of India, I seek to deliver the so-called weaker races of the earth from the crushing heels of western exploitation in which England is the greatest

partner. If India converts, as it can, Englishmen, it can become the predominant partner in a world commonwealth of which England can have the privilege of becoming a partner if she chooses. India has the right, if she only knew, of becoming the predominant partner by reason of her numbers, geographical position and culture inherited for ages. This is big talk I know. For a fallen India to aspire to move the world and protect weaker races is seemingly an impertinence. But in explaining my strong opposition to this cry for independence, I can no longer hide the light under a bushel. Mine is an ambition worth living for and worth dying for. In no case do I want to reconcile myself to a state lower than the best for fear of consequences. It is, therefore, not out of expedience that I oppose independence as my goal. I want India to come to her own and that state cannot be better defined by any word than swaraj. Its content will vary with the action that the nation is able to put forth at a given moment. India's coming to her own will mean every nation doing likewise."

There seemed to be a new impulse moving the people forward. In March, the six years' sentence passed on Gandhi expired. At the time of his premature release due to illness in 1924, he had said that it had brought him no joy. Gandhi had felt under constraint not to take an active part in politics for the remainder of six years. Now he was free again, and the time for his re-emergence was at hand.

One day, visitors came from Bardoli. Kalyanji and Kunvarji, the two brothers who had been working in the taluk for many years, went to the ashram at the request of Vallabhbhai Patel. They met Gandhi and accompanied him as he was going to Gujarat Vidyapith to give his weekly lecture. Kalyanji opened the talk, told him about the preparedness of Bardoli to refuse payment of the increment over the old assessment.

Gandhi: I don't quite understand that.

Kalyanji: Twenty-two per cent enhancement has been imposed. The people say they would like to pay the old assessment and refuse the twenty-two per cent increment.

Gandhi: That is most dangerous. The Government will fight you with the help of your own money and recover the increment. No assessment can be paid until the increment is cancelled, and you must plainly say to Government, "Declare the enhancement

cancelled and then take the old assessment which we are prepared to pay." Are the people prepared to take up this attitude?

Kalyanji: I am not quite sure about bigger places like Bardoli or Valod, for the *banias* in these places are naturally afraid that the Government might deprive them of their lands and transfer them to the original occupants, the Raniparaj people. But other villages are quite solid.

Gandhi: That's all right. But is their cause just and their case unassailable?

Kalyanji: Certainly. Narharibhai has shown it in his articles.

Gandhi: I do not know. I have not read the articles with care. But remember that you will have to keep the whole country with you, and the first condition is that your cause must be absolutely just. Then there is another point. The people may be prepared to fight. But do they know the true implications of satyagraha? Supposing Vallabhbhai is removed with the rest of you, will they stand together?

Kalyanji: That is more than I can say.

Gandhi: Well, you will have to ascertain that. But what does Vallabhbhai say?

Vallabhbhai had just arrived. He said he had studied the case and that the cause was just. "Well, then, there is nothing more to be considered," said Gandhi. "Victory to Gujarat!"

Contrary to the advice of the Parliamentary Committee appointed to consider the Government of India Bill, 1919, and contrary to the resolution of the Legislative Council of the Bombay Presidency in 1924, the Government of Bombay, in 1927, had raised the rate of the land tax nominally by twenty-two per cent, but in actual application in some instances over sixty per cent. In the case of Bardoli, the peasants claimed that the investigation upon which the increase had been based was wholly inadequate, that the tax official's report was inaccurate and carelessly compiled, and that the increase was unwarranted and unjust.

Vallabhbhai organized sixteen camps all over the taluk under the charge of 250 volunteers. A representative meeting of the peasants of Bardoli was held on February 12. It called upon landholders to refuse payment of the revised assessment, until the Government were prepared to accept the amount of the old assessment in full satisfaction of their dues or until the Government appointed an

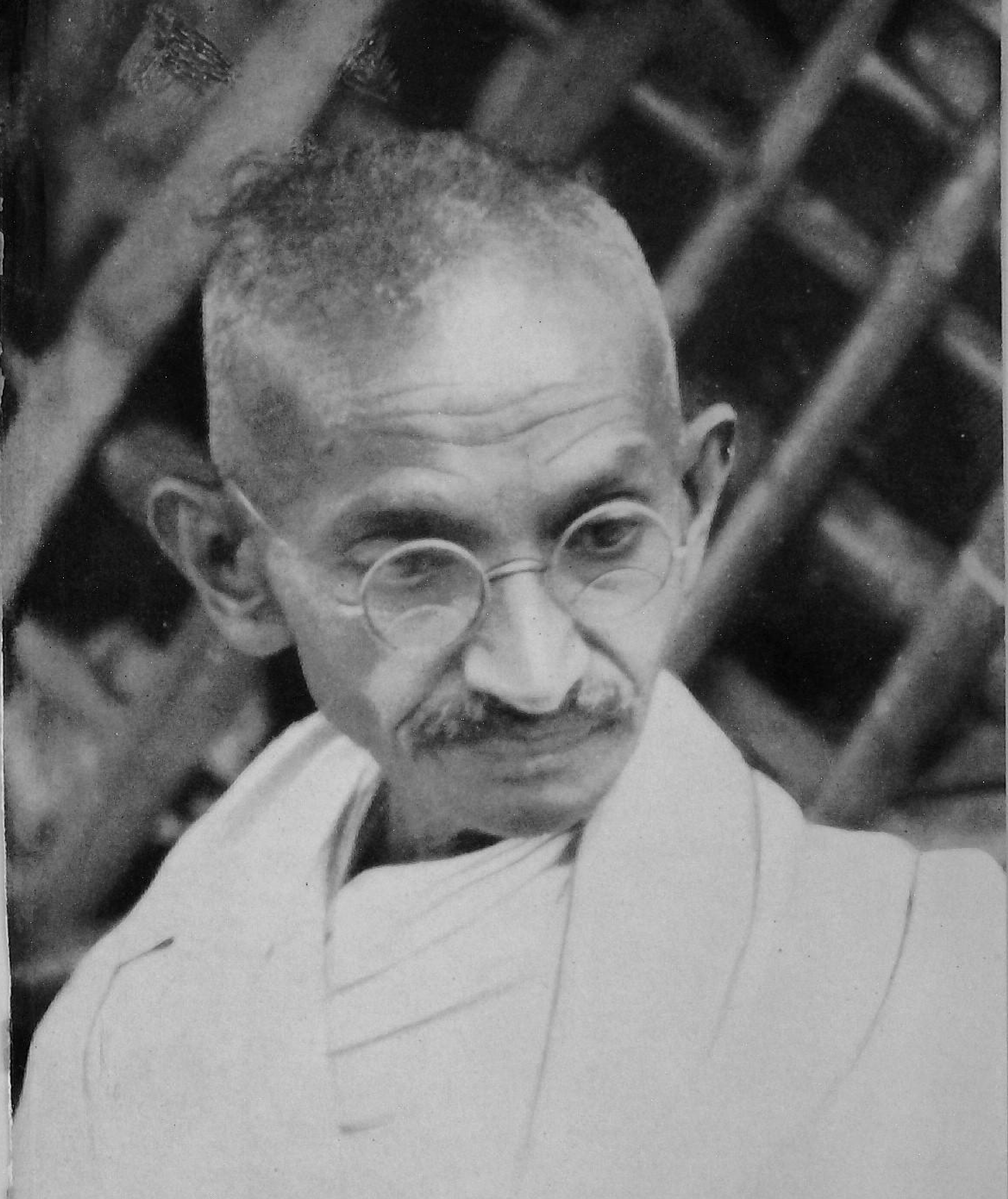
impartial tribunal to settle the question of revision by investigation on the spot. A pledge to remain non-violent and cheerfully suffer to the utmost was taken by the peasants.

Vallabhbhai was superb as a leader. The peasants adored him, spontaneously called him "Sardar". Vallabhbhai, in turn, humbly acknowledged himself "responsible to the man of Sabarmati", for he was using only the weapon of non-violence. Gandhi took keen interest in the struggle and filled the pages of *Young India* with his illuminating articles and vivid descriptions penned by Mahadev Desai. Vallabhbhai, a son of an agriculturist, spoke to the peasants in their idiom and was tireless and fearless as he moved among them. Gandhi, watching from a distance, remarked that "Vallabhbhai found his God—Vallabh—in Bardoli."

The Government tried their best to terrorize the people. They brought in hefty Pathans, they seized and sold movable property, they took away the buffaloes, they declared the lands forfeit and auctioned territories worth many times the value of their entire assessment for the district at absurd prices. Vallabhbhai encouraged the peasants: "Challenge the Government to take up your land, if they can, to England!" He directed the peasants to remain on their land and to sow their crops as before. No one came to eject them from the forfeited lands, but the number of 250 volunteers who had been enrolled to work among a population of 87,000 were arrested on preposterous charges and convicted to long terms of imprisonment for such offences as sitting on public road, watching the collector's house.

Seven members of the Legislative Council resigned in protest against the Government's repressive policy, and sixty-three patels and eleven talatis in Bardoli resigned. Vithalbhai Patel, President of the Legislative Assembly, representing Gujarat, appealed to the Viceroy to intervene, and publicly gave Rs. 1,000 a month for the Bardoli campaign.

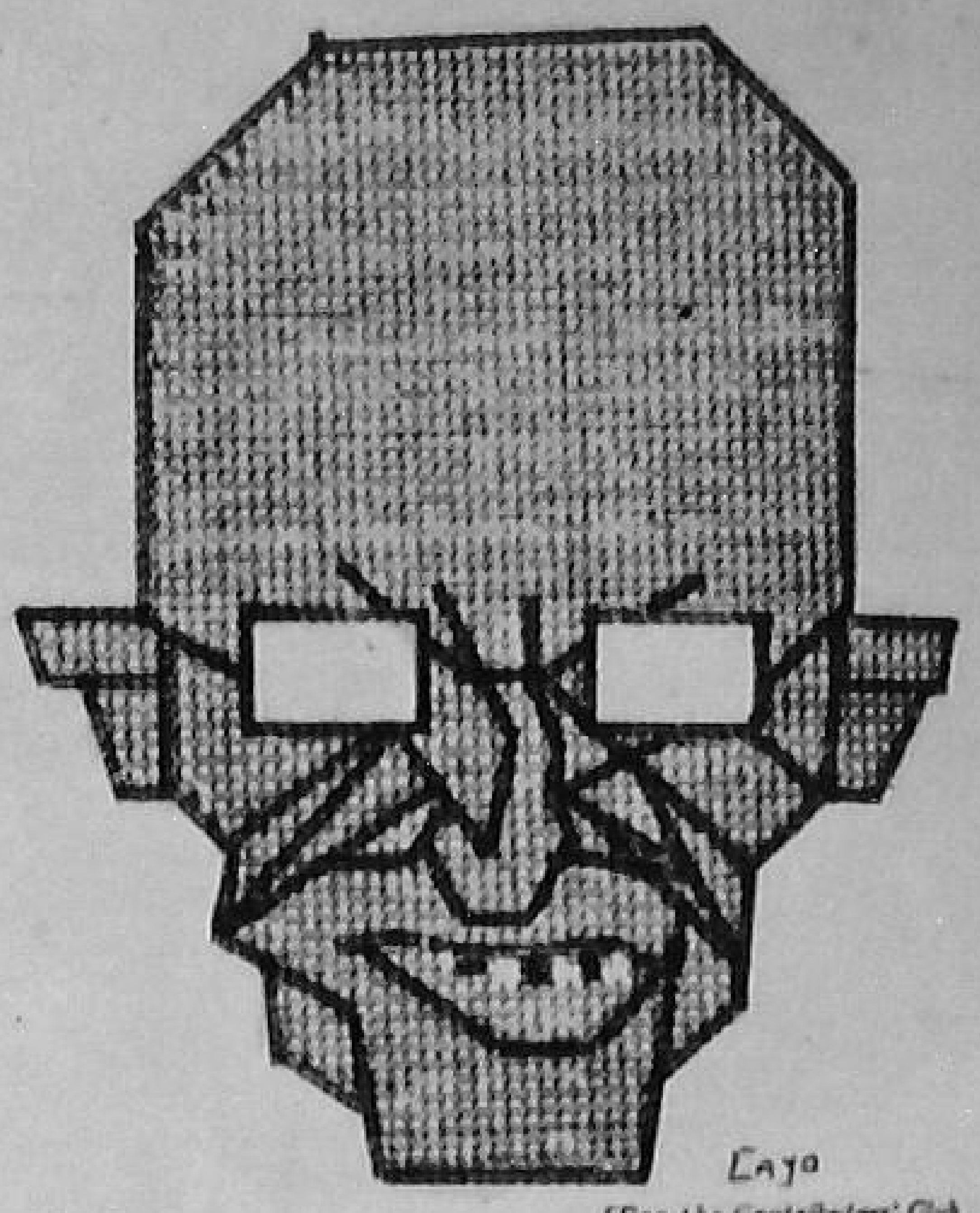
The Government of Bombay finally delivered an ultimatum on July 23, the source of which was plainly indicated by a simultaneous statement by the Secretary of State for India: "If the conditions mentioned by Sir Leslie Wilson in the Bombay Legislative Council as regards Bardoli are not satisfied, the Bombay Government have full support of the Government of India in enforcing compliance with law and crushing the movement which would clearly then


*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi, 1928

*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi's caricature in a British journal, 1928




Cayo] GANDHI [For the Contributors' Club

ALLEY-OOP! [Contributors' Club

*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Some more caricatures in British journals, 1928

Evening Standard] [London

INDIAN CUP FINAL.
A cartoonist's inspiration on the Cup Final Day.

Evening Standard] [London

UNITED INDIA

*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi and the Simon Report depicted by the British press, 1928

be exposed as one directed to coercing the Government and not representing reasonable grievances."

The Government ultimatum demanded that the new assessment should be paid at once into the treasury pending an inquiry which would be made by a revenue officer into disputed questions, facts and figures only. Vallabhbhai demanded the release of satyagrahi prisoners, the restoration of lands, sold and forfeited, the current price of the seized movables to be refunded, and all dismissals and punishments remitted. If this were done he would accept even an official inquiry, provided it was open and impartial and of a judicial nature, before which the people might appear. Gandhi and the Sardar together undertook that, if such an inquiry was announced the campaign would be called off and the old assessment paid without delay, pending investigation.

On August 2, Gandhi arrived in Bardoli to observe. The end came suddenly. A number of councillors gave an almost meaningless assurance for which the Government asked. Vallabhbhai, however, reiterated his own terms for settlement. But the assurance saved the Government's face and made it possible for them to announce an inquiry in the very words of Vallabhbhai's ultimatum. Within a short while the prisoners were free, the lands restored, the village officials reinstated and the inquiry in progress. Broomfield and Maxwell criticized the work of the assessment and revenue officials, and praised the "agitators" for their valuable co-operation. They recommended 5·7 per cent increase instead of 22 per cent. This did not completely satisfy all but the principle of independent inquiry had been established.

Bardoli became a sign and symbol of hope, strength and victory to the Indian peasant. Sardar Patel's name was proposed for the presidentship of the ensuing Calcutta Congress. But Gandhi said: "Bengal needs the elder Nehru. He is a man for honourable compromise. The country is in need of it and is in the mood for it. Therefore, have him." Under the brilliant leadership of Motilal Nehru the nation as a whole had successfully challenged the Simon Commission.

From purely political point of view the year was memorable for the boycott of the Simon Commission and what was called the constructive side of the boycott, the All-Parties Conference. The moderate groups now co-operated with the Congress. The Madras

TAMIL NAD GRAMA SEVAK VIDYALAYAM
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Congress had authorized the Working Committee to draw up a swaraj constitution in consultation with the other associations. A committee was formed by the All-Parties Conference in Bombay on May 19, with Motilal Nehru as its chairman. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, a member of this committee, was responsible for part of the report. For effecting maximum agreement between all parties in the country, dominion status was proposed by the committee as the basis of the Indian constitution. "The attainment of dominion status is not viewed as a remote stage of our evolution but as the next immediate step." No party, the committee declared, could be satisfied with less than that. Nor would those who wanted more be affected in the long run by the committee's decision. "It does not mean that any individual Congressman, much less the Congress itself, has given up or toned down the goal of complete independence." Jawaharlal Nehru, the secretary of the Nehru Committee, led the attack on the dominion status ideal, and he with his friends, Subhas Chandra Bose and Srinivas Iyengar, formed the Independence for India League to propagate the ideal of complete independence.

Having laid down the principle of dominion status, the Nehru Committee tackled the problem of communal and primarily Hindu-Muslim dissensions which, as they said, "cast their shadow over all political work". They were for removing from the minds of all communities a baseless fear of the other and in giving a feeling of security to all. "The only method of giving a feeling of security are safeguards and guarantees and the grant, as far as possible, of cultural autonomy."

While making a number of concessions to the Muslims, the Nehru Committee, unlike the framers of the Lucknow Scheme, refused to tolerate separate electorates. It declared that separate electorates violated the essential principles of responsible government and had failed to pave the way to a better understanding between the two communities. It recommended that elections should be by joint or mixed electorates and that the only communal safeguard should be the reservation of seats and that too for Muslims only where they were in a minority. The number of seats reserved was to be in strict proportion to the size of the community. "A minority must remain a minority whether any seats are reserved for it or not." The Nehru Report was published in August. At the time of the

announcement of the Statutory Commission, Lord Birkenhead had said that in the three years, during which he had been Secretary of State, he had twice invited critics in India to put forward their own suggestions for a constitution and that this offer was still open. These words were regarded by the Indian leaders as a challenge from Government to produce a constitution which might gain the approval of all interests in India. The Nehru Report was the reply to the arrogant challenge. The first edition of 2,000 copies of the Nehru Report was sold out in five days.

"I venture to suggest that the report satisfies all reasonable aspirations and is quite capable of standing on its own merits," observed Gandhi. "All that is needed to put the finishing touch to the work of the Nehru Committee is a little forbearance, a little mutual respect, a little mutual trust, a little give and take and confidence, not in our little selves but in the great nation of which each one of us is but a humble member."

All-Parties Conference met at Lucknow in August to consider the Nehru Committee Report. Amongst those present were the Raja of Mahmudabad, Sir Ali Imam, Sir C. Sankaran Nair, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Motilal Nehru. The conference accepted in principle the recommendations of the Nehru Report. Gandhi was not present at the conference but he hailed it most enthusiastically:

"The most brilliant victory achieved at Lucknow following as it does closely on the heels of Bardoli makes a happy conjunction of events. Pandit Motilalji is today the proudest man in India and has every reason to be so. But even he could have done nothing if every one had not conspired to make the proceedings a success. It would have been easy for the Hindus or the Musalmans to block the way. The Sikhs could have done likewise. But no one had the heart to destroy the patient labours of the Nehru Committee. Little wonder that Pandit Malaviyaji, the irrepressible optimist, said that swaraj would be attained in 1930.

"The honours for the happy result must, however, be shared with Pandit Nehru by Dr. Ansari. He used his unrivalled influence with the Musalmans in disarming their opposition. Hindus could not resist his transparent honesty and equally transparent nationalism. The Liberals led by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru lent a weight to the conference which it would otherwise have lacked. I join Mrs. Besant

in her wish that they would re-enter the national organization. They need not lose their identity even as the Hindu and the Musalman organizations do not lose theirs.

"The mention of the Liberals brings us to the future work. There is still much diplomatic work to be done. But more than the diplomatic work is that of forging the sanction. Jawaharlal Nehru truly observed that whether it was dominion status or independence, a proper sanction would be necessary if the national demand was to be enforced. Bardoli has shown the way, if the sanction has to be non-violent. . .

"If then we are sure of the sanction, we need not worry whether swaraj is otherwise spelt dominion status or independence. Dominion status can easily become more than independence, if we have the sanction to back it. Independence can easily become a farce, if it lacks sanction. What is in a name if we have the reality? A rose smells just as sweet whether you know it by that name, or any other. Let us, therefore, make up our minds as to whether it is to be non-violence or violence, and let the rank and file work for the sanction in real earnest even as the diplomats must work at constitution-making."

Meanwhile, the Simon Commission had been moving about, pursued by black flags and hostile crowds shouting, "Simon go back". The commission had landed in Bombay on February 3, for its preliminary tour, and an all-India hartal had been observed. On the eve of its arrival, the Viceroy, in his address to the Central Assembly, solemnly stated: "It is possible for people to stand aside and withhold their contribution, just as it will be possible for the commission to prosecute its inquiry and with the assistance at its disposal reach conclusion in spite of such abstention." The members of the assembly were pledged to the boycott of the commission not only officially but also to the length of boycotting it socially. There was a huge procession of 50,000 people in Bombay and the police opened fire on that occasion. The "Simon Seven" reached Delhi on February 4. From Delhi they went to Calcutta, then to Madras and north again to Lahore. In Madras the police opened fire, killing and injuring a number of people. There was scuffle between the police and students in Calcutta and elsewhere. The climax reached at Lahore where Lajpat Rai, aged sixty-four, standing by the road-side in front of demonstrators, was assaulted

and beaten on the chest with a baton by an English officer. On November 8, Gandhi received a wire from Lala Lajpat Rai in answer to his anxious inquiry: "Assault unprovoked and deliberate. Received two injuries but not serious, one on left chest, other on shoulder, other blows warded by friends." On November 17, Lala Lajpat Rai died.

"Men like Lalaji can't die so long as the sun shines in the Indian sky," wrote Gandhi. "His activities were multifarious. He was an ardent social and religious reformer. Like many of us he became a politician because his zeal for social and religious reform demanded participation in politics. He observed at an early stage of his public career that much reform of the type he wanted was not possible until the country was freed from foreign domination. It appeared to him, as to most of us, as a poison corrupting every department of our life.

"It is not possible to think of a single public movement in which he was not to be found. His life of service was insatiable. He founded educational institutions; he befriended the suppressed classes; poverty wherever found claimed his attention. He surrounded young men with extraordinary affection. No young man appealed to him in vain for help. In political field he was indispensable. He was fearless in the expression of his views. He suffered for it when suffering had not become customary or fashionable. His life was an open book. His extreme frankness often embarrassed his friends, if it also confounded his critics. But he was incorrigible.

"With all deference to my Musalman friends, I assert that he was no enemy of Islam. His desire to strengthen and purify Hinduism must not be confounded with hatred of Musalmans or Islam. He was sincerely desirous of promoting and achieving Hindu-Muslim unity. He wanted not Hindu raj but he passionately wanted Indian raj; he wanted all who called themselves Indians to have absolute equality. I wish that Lalaji's death would teach us to trust one another. And we could easily do this if we could but shed fear.

"There will be, as there must be, a demand for a memorial. In my humble opinion, no memorial can be complete without a definite determination to achieve the freedom for which he lived and died so nobly. Let us recall what has after all proved to be his last will. He has bequeathed to the younger generation the task of vindicating India's freedom and honour. Will they prove worthy

of the trust he has reposed in them? Shall we the older survivors deserve to have had Lalaji as a countryman by making a fresh, united, supreme effort to realize the dream of a long line of patriots in which Lalaji was so distinguished a member?"

The death of Lajpat Rai bred an intense revolutionary mentality among the youth of the country. There were savage lathi charges, and amongst the victims were men like Jawaharlal Nehru and Govind Ballabh Pant.

In December, Mr. Saunders, the assistant police superintendent of Lahore, was shot dead while leaving his office. "I should not wonder if the assassination proves to be in revenge of the high-handed policy of the Punjab Government," commented Gandhi. "Let the youth of India realize that Lalaji's death can only be avenged by regaining her freedom. Freedom of a nation cannot be won by solitary acts of heroism though they may be of the true type, never by heroism so called. The temple of freedom requires the patient, intelligent and constructive effort of tens and thousands of men and women, young and old. Acts such as we are deploring decidedly retard the progress of this quiet building. When it does nothing else, it diverts the attention of countless builders."

A wave of leftist ideas was surging all round. The newly formed youth leagues, mainly consisting of students, took a very prominent part in the boycott of the Simon Commission. They brought forth energetic workers like Yusuf J. Meherally. Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Bose, who had a leaning towards socialism, were in great demand at the youth rallies. Soviet Russia, China and Turkey attracted the youth strongly. The young men thought along lines of utopian socialism, and a few considered themselves thorough Marxists. This tendency was strengthened in India by developments in the Soviet Union, particularly the five-year plan. *Young India* featured Jawaharlal's articles on Russia. The students of Gujarat Vidyapith discussed Bolshevism with Gandhi, who defined his own attitude thus:

"I must confess that I have not been able fully to understand Bolshevism. All that I know is that it aims at the abolition of the institution of private property. This is an application of the ethical ideal of non-possession in the realm of economics, and if the people adopted this ideal of their own accord or could be made to accept it by means of peaceful persuasion there would be nothing

like it. But from what I know of Bolshevism, it not only does not preclude the use of force but freely sanctions it for the expropriation of private property and maintaining the collective state ownership of the same. And if that is so I have no hesitation in saying that the Bolshevik regime in its present form cannot last for long. For, it is my firm conviction that nothing enduring can be built on violence. But be that as it may, there is no questioning the fact that the Bolshevik ideal has behind it the purest sacrifice of countless men and women who have given up their all for its sake, and an ideal sanctified by the sacrifices of such master spirits as Lenin cannot go in vain; the noble example of their renunciation will be emblazoned for ever and quicken and purify the ideal as time passes."

The death of Lajpat Rai, a few weeks before the session of the Congress, had its effect. In an atmosphere of subdued excitement the last meeting of the A.-I.C.C. for the year was held on December 26. Among those present were Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, Malaviya, J. M. Sengupta, Srinivas Iyengar, Jawaharlal Nehru, Subhas Bose, Mrs. Besant, Sapru, Rajendra Prasad, and Azad. The Ali brothers strongly opposed the Nehru Report and Shaukat Ali declared that he had taken a vow "not to participate in any mixed gathering of Hindus and Muslims for one year unless the present atmosphere was changed", and he would in the meantime devote his time and energy exclusively "to organizing Muslims not against Hindus but for the service of the country".

The most important resolution on the agenda was on dominion status, which was moved by Gandhi. "It is an open secret that we have in our camp sharp differences of opinion as to the lead the Congressmen should receive in connection with the epoch-making report of the All-Parties Committee," said Gandhi at the outset. Srinivas Iyengar, Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Bose were very much against the dominion status idea, while Motilal Nehru had made it clear that he would not preside over the Congress if he could not have a majority for the resolution in favour of his report. Gandhi struck a middle path and proposed that "the Congress shall not be bound by the constitution, if it is not accepted on or before the 31st of December 1930 and provided further that in the event of non-acceptance by the British Parliament of the said constitution by that date, the Congress will revive non-violent non-co-operation."

"I, therefore, want you to accept that report whole-heartedly with fixed determination to work," he said. "For that work I do not want you to water down your goal. The fire of independence is burning just as bright in my breast as in the most fiery breast in this country; but ways and methods differ, and it may be when I am nearing my destiny on this earth I may feel weakened. You will not then listen to me, then hiss me out of the platform. I will consider myself unworthy to serve the nation out of weakness. I want to dedicate what little strength I have to the nation and not my weakness."

Gandhi was strongly opposed by the younger group. The dispute which had occurred in the Nehru Committee as to India's future association with the British Commonwealth was revived, and this time the majority, including Jawaharlal, repudiated the dominion status and declared that there would be no true freedom till the British connection was totally severed. Speaking on his amendment Jawaharlal said: "It is unbecoming for the Working Committee's secretary to challenge a resolution recommended by the Working Committee and certainly it might be considered presumptuous on my part to challenge the resolution moved by Gandhiji. Notwithstanding, I have felt it incumbent to do so because of the very teaching I have learnt at his feet, because of the lesson he taught me when I had the high privilege to serve under his banner."

A split in the Congress ranks appeared inevitable, but after long talks with the leaders, Gandhi effected a compromise by agreeing to alter the wording of the resolution so as to give Parliament a time-limit of a year instead of two years in which to accept the constitution as recommended by the Nehru Report. The clause in the original resolution, relating to the despatch of a copy of the resolution together with the report to the Viceroy, was deleted. The clause relating to the propaganda for independence was amended so as to permit the advocates of independence to carry on their campaign in the name of the Congress. It declared that if the constitution recommended by the All-Parties Committee Report was rejected, or it was not accepted by December 31, 1929, the Congress would organize non-violent non-co-operation by advising the country to refuse taxation and in such other manner as may be decided upon. The resolution was passed in the Subjects Committee by 118 votes against 45.

In the open session, Subhas Bose moved an amendment to the compromise resolution and he was supported by Jawaharlal Nehru, both of them parties to the compromise. Gandhi felt hurt and said: "You may take the name of independence on your lips, as the Muslims utter the name of Allah or the pious Hindus utter the name of Krishna or Rama, but all that muttering will be an empty formula if there is no honour behind it. If you are not prepared to stand by your words, where will independence be? Independence is a thing made of sterner stuff. It is not made by the juggling of words." Division on Subhas' amendment took an hour and it was lost by 973 voting for and 1,350 voting against.

By another resolution Gandhi outlined the programme for the coming year. In legislatures and outside Congressmen must attempt to bring about prohibition, and they should immediately try to bring about boycott of foreign cloth by advocating and stimulating production and adoption of khaddar; the councillors returned on the Congress ticket were asked to devote the best of their time to constructive work. Amelioration of the status of women, removal of social abuses, village reconstruction, and organization of city proletariat were new items added to the programme. "It is only by constructive programme that the revival of non-co-operation is possible," he said. "If you want the Nehru Report to fructify the least you can do is to work out this resolution."

In concluding the session Motilal Nehru said: "Both Subhas and Jawahar have told you in their speeches on the amendment to Mahatmaji's resolution that, in their opinion, we old-age men are no good, are not strong enough and are much behind the times. There is nothing new in this. It is common in this world that the young always regard aged men as behind times. I would give you one word of advice. Erase from your mind from today those two terms borrowed from foreign language, namely, independence and dominion status, and take to the words swaraj and *azadi*. Let us work for swaraj by whatever name we might call it. Carry out the programme which Mahatmaji placed before you and which you have accepted. One year is nothing in the history of the nation. I have not the least doubt that the next Congress will see us united and taking another forward step."

The session of the All-India Khilafat Conference was held at Calcutta on December 25, under the presidentship of Mahomed

## *Year Of Grace*

1929

GANDHI had intended to go to Europe but he felt he must stay in India. "Having put a constructive resolution before the Congress and having received universal support, I feel that I would be guilty of desertion if I now went to Europe," he wrote in *Young India* of January 31, 1929. "The voice within tells me I must not only hold myself in readiness to do what comes my way, but I must even think out and suggest means of working out what to me is a great programme. Above all, I must prepare myself for the next year's struggle whatever shape it may take. If Nehru Report is not accepted by or on behalf of the British people before the end of the year, after midnight on December 31 next, it will cease to have any meaning for me, I must declare myself an independence-walla. But if I mean this seriously, I may not leave India for the best part of this year of probation and preparation. Not that I do not need all the help I can get from outside for my country, but I do not believe in a begging expedition for that purpose. That aid will come when we deserve it and then it will come without the asking. I need greater preparation. Meanwhile let these columns be living bond between them and me."

Gandhi now set his heart upon infusing the khadi spirit. The significance of khadi, it seemed, was still not grasped even by the Congressmen. During the Calcutta session a delegate with a khadi scarf and mill dhoti had to set aside his dhoti and put on the scarf to make himself eligible for voting. The flag, ceremoniously hoisted by the Congress President, at Calcutta, had no place on it for the charkha. Gandhi prepared a scheme for the boycott of foreign cloth through khadi.

According to this scheme, Congress organizations were called upon to enrol volunteers to go from door to door in every town and village and collect foreign cloth in the possession of householders,

deliver and receive orders for khadi required by them. All khadi should bear the stamp of the All-India Spinners' Association and prices should be distinctly marked; voluntary preachers should be called for to popularize the use of khadi and to advocate complete boycott of foreign cloth, foreign cloth collected should be publicly burnt wherever possible, foreign-cloth-dealers should be individually visited to induce them to stop further purchase of foreign cloth, foreign cloth shops should be peacefully picketed, resolutions should be moved in the provincial legislatures as well as in the assembly calling upon their respective governments to make all their cloth purchases in khadi irrespective of its so-called costliness, and resolutions should be moved demanding a prohibitive duty on imports of foreign cloth; foreign cloth boycott committees also should be formed and entrusted with the work of publishing and distributing propaganda leaflets.

"Let it be understood that it is not possible to accomplish the boycott through any other means," observed Gandhi. "Let no one worry about the place of the indigenous mill cloth in the boycott. This cloth has taken care of itself and will take care of itself. What we need to do is to clothe with khadi those whom we reach. If we speak with two voices, we shall fail in carrying out the boycott. We shall succeed only in inflating the prices of indigenous mill cloth and in tempting unscrupulous millowners to commit frauds upon a gullible public."

On January 1, he performed the opening ceremony of a khaddar shop in Calcutta. Those who were prepared to buy khadi worth two rupees at the least were allowed to be present on the occasion. In one hour, 352 people bought khadi worth Rs. 5,000 and received vouchers signed by Gandhi.

He then returned to Ahmedabad to look into the ashram affairs and Gujarat Vidyapith. In *Navajivan* he criticized the shortcomings of the ashram inmates. A trivial lapse of Kasturbai formed the subject of the article, "My Sorrow, My Shame":

"Constantly, thinking whether I should write this chapter or not, ultimately, I came to the conclusion that it would be a breach of duty if I did not. Many friends consider the industrial school of the Satyagraha Ashram to be a holy place. Some send money for khadi, etc., in the sacred memory of their deceased relatives and I accept it.

"In spite of this, great sins have been committed in this mandir. I have announced them before the inmates of the mandir; but that is not enough. The relation between me and the readers of *Navajivan* is a sacred tie. The purity of myself and of those who are mine has been taken for granted by the readers. I have often said that a sin should not be concealed. I have no secrets. It is necessary, therefore, that the breaches committed by those connected with the mandir should be placed before the public.

"Chhaganlal Gandhi, whom I have brought up as my son and have kept by my side since his childhood, has been caught in the act of committing a series of embezzlements. Had he publicly confessed them himself, my grief would have been much less. But these were discovered accidentally by his vigilant secretary who is his namesake. The attempt made by this nephew of mine to conceal his fault proved unsuccessful. When the discovery was made, his repentance knew no bounds. Now, he weeps bitterly. For the present, he has left the mandir voluntarily, and I hope that he will come back after purifying himself. The mandir would welcome him. These embezzlements have been found to be insignificant. Thinking over them, I have come to the conclusion that it was a disease from which Chhaganlal Gandhi was suffering. The mandir has not suffered any economic loss on account of the embezzlement. Chhaganlal Gandhi has savings worth Rs.10,000. I do not go into details. He has given away that sum to the mandir in accordance with my advice. Not magnanimity but a stern sense of duty dictated the act. One who has taken the vow of non-possession cannot have private property. Chhaganlal had it. That pricked me. Chhaganlal, his wife and his two sons felt that they could not keep that money. So, the mandir got it. I believe now Chhaganlal has not got anything else but his share in his father's property. When I think of Chhaganlal Gandhi's thirty-year service and his simple life, it becomes difficult to understand this act of his. Nature asserts itself.

"This is one act of shame. We now come to the second. I have not hesitated to count the many merits of Kasturbai in my autobiography. She has co-operated with me whether willingly or unwillingly in the great changes of my life. I consider her life to be pure. She has sacrificed a great deal thinking it to be her duty as a wife, though not with understanding. She has not stood in the way of my renunciation. She has won me over by nursing me in my

illness. I have left no stone unturned to make her suffer. She has helped me, rather protected me, in the observance of celibacy. She has got weaknesses too which mar these virtues. Although she has given away all the money considering it to be the duty of a wife, an ununderstandable, worldly desire still persists. A year or two back she had kept with her one or two hundred rupees which were received as presents from various persons on various occasions. The rule is that she cannot keep anything as hers, even when it is given for her. So, this keeping of money was unlawful. Fortunately for her and for the mandir, once thieves entered her room. They did not get anything but her delinquency was detected owing to their coming. She repented sincerely but the repentance proved shortlived. A real change of heart had not taken place. The fascination for treasuring money had not vanished. Some days back, some strangers presented four rupees. Instead of giving away the money to the office, according to the usual rule, she kept it with herself. An ashramite was a witness to this. His duty was to make Kasturbai vigilant. Though he was a witness to this unlawfulness, owing to a false sense of delicacy, he concealed the fact. The residents of the mandir had become cautious after the Chhaganlal incident. The witness to Kasturbai's theft informed Chhaganlal Joshi. Joshi went to Kasturbai trembling. She felt repentant and in all humility she gave back the money and vowed that such a thing would not be repeated. I believe hers was an honest repentance. She has taken a vow that she would leave me and the mandir, if any other lapse committed in the past is detected, or if she is caught doing the same thing again in future. The mandir has accepted her repentance. If the inmates forgive her and she stays in the mandir, she will enjoy the same honoured place as before.

"Now about the third act of shame.

"A widow was staying in the mandir three years back. All of us believed that she was chaste. A young man brought up in an orphanage was also staying there during that time. We considered him to be a good man too. He was unmarried then. He developed illicit relations with that widow. This case can be considered to be comparatively old; but it is tragic that such pollution is to be found in an ashram in which Herculean efforts are being made for the observance of chastity.

"Such is the ashram! Such is the mandir!

"If friends and unknown and simple readers leave me and the mandir, it would serve a double purpose. Both they and I shall feel free. But domestic problems are not solved quite so easily. Neither the good persons nor the bad living in the mandir would leave it.

"I request the reader to believe me when I say that these lapses are a symbol of my limitations. In writing the above lines, therefore, I do not wish to convey that I am good and my companions bad. It is my firm belief that many weaknesses lying deep down in me come out as boils in the above-mentioned forms. I have never claimed to be perfect. Ashram's sins are echoes of mine. I can only say that I do not know my sins. Who knows if I am contaminating the surrounding atmosphere by committing sins in the unfathomable world? The epithet 'mahatma' has always pricked me; today I take it to be an abuse. But where shall I go? What shall I do? Shall I escape by committing suicide, by fasting, by burying myself in the ashram, or refusing to take a pie either for public work or for my maintenance. I do not feel like doing anything of these for the present. Perhaps I have not the courage.

"Even if others do not listen to me but only those living in the mandir do so sincerely, I am optimistic enough to hope to achieve the swaraj of my conception. I am always ready to detect and eradicate my shortcomings. Therefore, in spite of the foregoing recital, I live in the faith that even now the ashram will be worthy of its name and again function as such. At present, I must satisfy myself that imperfections should be made public as they occur and that the mandir should go on functioning.

"How can I leave a work undertaken for God's love without His bidding? When God wishes that I should leave this work, He will inspire the people to shun me. I live in the hope that even if such a thing happens, the heart would be able to say, 'I am Thine.'

"It is my desire to see God through this imperfect institution. I consider it to be my best creation. It is a measuring rod by which I must be measured. That hope remains unchanged in spite of the awkward manifestations. It is possible that this belief of mine is a sheer illusion or madness.

"Though the imagination of silver in a shell and of water in a mirage is false for all time, it is real for one who does not know the truth. Nothing can remove the illusion but true knowledge. So must it be with me."

Having read the article, Azad observed: "There is a man whose truth not even his enemies can doubt." He was astonished at the length to which Gandhi's truth would carry him.

Dr. John Mott, an evangelist, who had gone round the world several times, and who had had intimate contacts with men like Tolstoy, President Masaryk of Czechoslovakia, came to Sabarmati to have talks with Gandhi.

"What do you consider to be the most valuable contribution that India can make to the progress of the world?" asked Dr. Mott. "Non-violence," replied Gandhi, "which the country is exhibiting at the present day on a scale unprecedented in history. But for it there might have been a blaze, for provocation of the gravest kind has not been wanting on the side of the Government. There is, no doubt, a school in the country that believes in violence, but it is a mere excrescence on the surface and its ideals are not likely to find a congenial soil in the country."

From this, they passed on to the distinctive contributions of Hinduism, Islam and Christianity to the upbuilding of the nation. Gandhi said: "The most distinctive and the largest contribution of Hinduism to India's culture is the doctrine of ahimsa. It has given a definite bias to the history of India for the last three thousand years and over, and it has not ceased to be a living force in the lives of India's millions even now. It is a growing doctrine, its message is still being delivered. Its teaching has so far permeated our people that an armed revolution has almost become an impossibility in India, not because, as some would have it, we as a race are physically weak, for it does not require much strength so much as a devilish will to press a trigger to shoot a person, but because the tradition of ahimsa has struck deep root among the people."

Referring to Islam, he mentioned as its distinctive contribution, "its unadulterated belief in the oneness of God and a practical application of the truth of the brotherhood of man for those who are nominally within its fold. I call these two distinctive contributions. For, in Hinduism the spirit of brotherhood has become too much philosophized. Similarly though philosophical Hinduism has no other god but God, it cannot be denied that practical Hinduism is not so emphatically uncompromising as Islam."

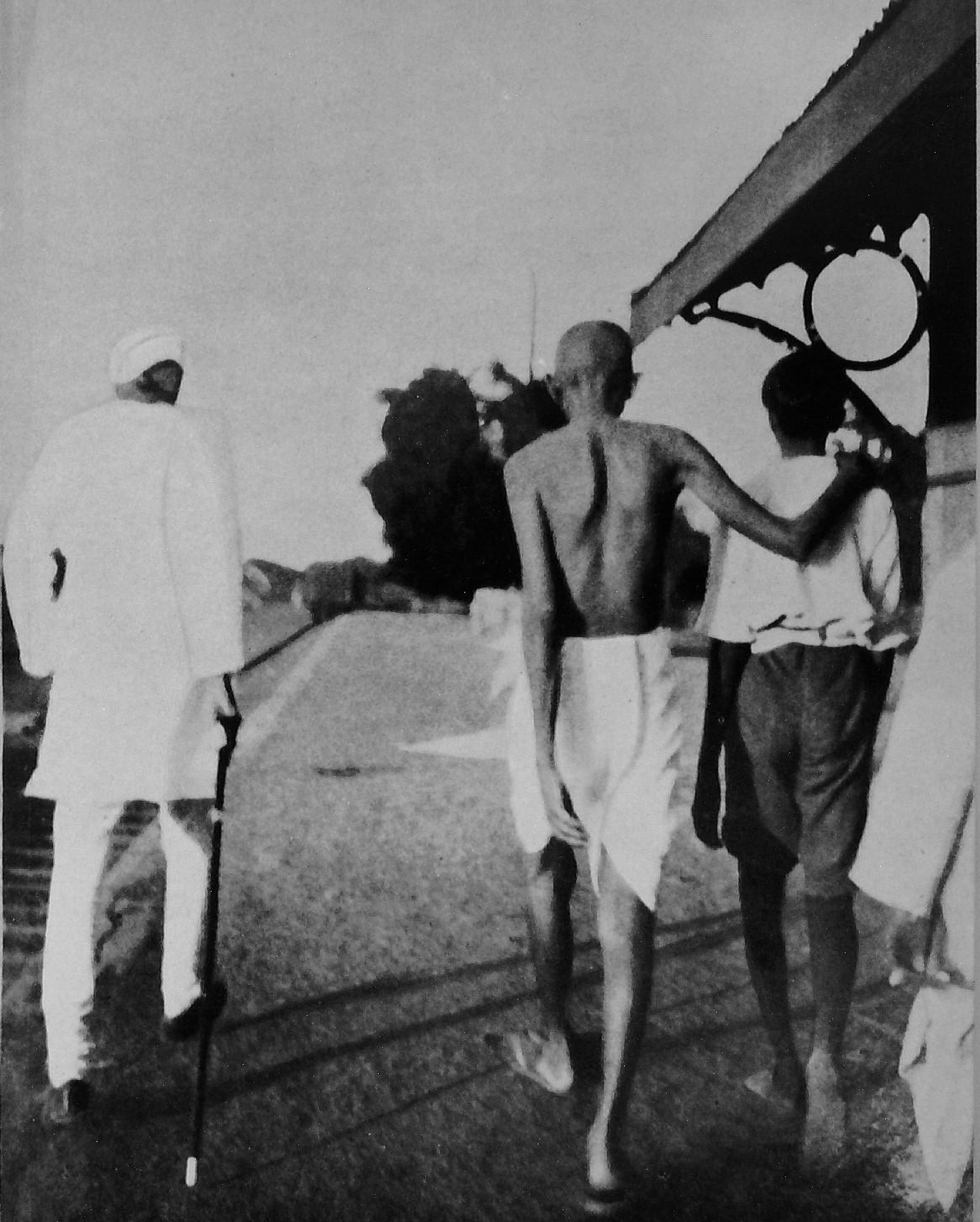
"What is the contribution of Christianity to the national life of India? I mean the influence of Christ as apart from Christianity,

Courtesy : N. R. Phatak

Gandhi, aged 60, rushing to a Working Committee meeting

Courtesy: Manubhai Trivedi

Gandhi, on his evening walk, accompanied by Kasturbai, Vallabhbhai Patel, and Mirabehn, Sabarmati, 1929



*Courtesy : Manubhai Trivedi*

Gandhi arriving at a wayside railway station, 1929

Courtesy : Kusumben Desai

Kasturbai Gandhi at carding, Sabarmati Ashram, 1929

for I am afraid there is a wide gulf separating the two at present," observed Dr. Mott.

"There's the rub," said Gandhi. "It is not possible to consider the teaching of a religious teacher apart from the lives of his followers. Unfortunately, Christianity in India is inextricably mixed up for the last hundred and fifty years with the British rule. It appears to us as synonymous with materialistic civilization and imperialistic exploitation by the stronger white races of the weaker races of the world. Its contribution to India has been, therefore, largely of a negative character. It has done some good in spite of its professors. It has shocked us into setting our own house in order. Christian missionary literature has drawn pointed attention to some of our abuses and set us thinking."

"What has interested me most," Dr. Mott said, "is your work in connection with the removal of untouchability. Will you please tell me what is the most hopeful sign indicating that this institution is, as you say, on its last legs?"

"It is the reaction that is taking place in orthodox Hinduism and the swiftness with which it has come about," replied Gandhi. "As a most illustrious example, I will mention Pandit Malaviya. Ten years back he was as punctilious in the observance of the rules with regard to untouchability as perhaps the most orthodox Hindu of that day. Today he takes pride in administering the mantra of purification to the untouchables by the bank of the Ganges, sometimes even incurring the wrath of unreasoning orthodoxy. He was all but assaulted by the die-hard section in Calcutta, in December last, for doing this very thing. In Wardha a wealthy merchant, Jamnalal Bajaj, recently threw open his magnificent temple to the untouchables and that without arousing any serious opposition. The most remarkable thing about it is that from the record kept in the temple of the visitors it was found that the attendance had gone up instead of declining since the admission of the untouchables to it. I may sum up the outlook by saying that I expect the tide against untouchability to rise still more swiftly in the near future, astonishingly swift as it has already been."

"Where do you find your friends? Do you get the backing of the Muslims and Christians in this work?" Dr. Mott inquired.

"The Muslims and Christians," said Gandhi, "can from the very nature of the case render little help in this matter. The removal of

untouchability is a question of the purification of Hinduism. This can only be effected from within."

"But my impression was that Christians would be a great help to you in this connection," said Dr. Mott. "Rev. Whitehead of the Church of England Mission made some very striking statements about the effect of Christian mass movement in ameliorating the condition of the untouchables in the Madras Presidency."

"I distrust mass movement of this nature," interposed Gandhi. "They have as their object not the upliftment of the untouchables but their ultimate conversion. This motive of mass proselytization lurking at the background vitiates missionary effort."

"There are conflicting opinions on this point," put in Dr. Mott. "There are some who seriously believe that the untouchables would be better off if they turned Christians from conviction, and that it would transform their lives for the better."

"I am sorry I have been unable to discover any tangible evidence to confirm this view," said Gandhi. "I was once taken to a Christian village. Instead of meeting among the converts with that frankness which one associates with a spiritual transformation, I found an air of evasiveness about them. They were afraid to talk. This struck me as a change not for the better but for the worse."

Dr. Mott: "Do you then disbelieve in all conversion?"

Gandhi: "I disbelieve in the conversion of one person by another. My effort should never be to undermine another's faith but to make him a better follower of his own faith. This implies belief in the truth of all religions and respect for them. It again implies true humility, a recognition of the fact that the divine light having been vouchsafed to all religions through an imperfect medium of flesh, they must share in more or less degree the imperfection of the vehicle."

Dr. Mott: "Is it not our duty to help fellow beings to the maximum of truth that we may possess, to share with them our deepest spiritual experiences?"

Gandhi: "I must again differ from you, for the simple reason that the deepest spiritual truths are always unutterable. That light to which you refer transcends speech. It can be felt only through the inner experience. And then the highest truth needs no communicating, for it is by its very nature self-propelling. It radiates its influence silently as the rose its fragrance without the intervention of a medium."

Dr. Mott: "But even God sometimes speaks through His chosen prophets."

Gandhi: "Yes, but the prophets speak not through the tongue but through their lives. I have, however, known that in this matter I am up against a solid wall of Christian opinion."

"Oh, no," replied Dr. Mott. "Even among Christians there is a school of thought—and it is growing—which holds that the authoritarian method should not be employed, but that each individual should be left to discover the deepest truths of life for himself. The argument advanced is that the process of spiritual discovery is bound to vary in the case of different individuals according to their needs and temperaments. In other words they feel that propaganda in the accepted sense of the term is not the most effective method."

"I am glad to hear you say this," said Gandhi. "That is what Hinduism certainly inculcates."

"What causes you solicitude for the future of the country?" asked Dr. Mott. "Our apathy and hardness of heart, if I may use that Biblical phrase, as typified in the attitude towards the masses and their poverty," said Gandhi. "Our youth are full of noble feelings and impulses, but these have not yet taken any definite practical shape. If our youth had a living, active faith in truth and non-violence, for instance, we should have made much greater headway by now. All our young men, however, are not apathetic and I am sustained by the hope that they will act as the leaven and in time transform the entire mass."

The year of probation and preparation began on February 2, the day Gandhi left Ahmedabad for Sind. This was his second visit to that province after twelve years and now he again travelled third class.

In Karachi the programme was very heavy, and it opened with an address from the municipality, on February 3. Among other things the address mentioned how the municipality had by giving to every person, who paid a monthly rent of two rupees, the right to vote, enfranchised one-third of the entire population of Karachi. Whilst Gandhi congratulated the municipality on the reform, he hoped that it would at no distant date do away with the money-basis franchise altogether and bring itself into line with the progressive democratic spirit of the time, by substituting in its place universal adult suffrage that would give the right of voting to everyone

who was of a sound mind. He further suggested that by completely municipalizing the milk trade of the city, the municipality should ensure plentiful supply of pure and cheap milk for the citizens of Karachi and set an example to the whole of India.

The next day a citizens' meeting was held to present him with a purse of Rs. 43,000 for the Lajpat Rai Memorial Fund. His speech was a fervent appeal to the people not to content merely with subscribing to the fund, howsoever handsomely, but to raise the only memorial that could satisfy the spirit of the great leader by winning swaraj for India, a work for which Lajpat Rai lived and laboured all his days and for which he died a martyr's death. And the way to do so was to carry out the fourfold constructive programme laid down by the Calcutta Congress. If they applied themselves to it with a will, they would either find themselves within a measurable distance of swaraj at the end of the year, or be called upon to revive non-co-operation and launch on a no-tax campaign in 1930.

Contact with Sindhi youths commenced with the function of the students where a joint address was presented to Gandhi on behalf of the Law College, the Engineering College and the Arts College of Karachi. The address was in English. "Well, young men," he began, "an English proverb says, 'Imitation is the sincerest flattery.' But whilst you have waxed eloquent in praise of me, I find that in practice you are violating all those things for which I stand. It looks almost as if you meant to say, 'We know what you want but all the same we are going to do just the contrary.' You could not possibly have meant to offer me a deliberate insult. Then, was it that you wanted to pull my leg, by translating me to the frozen Himalayan heights of 'mahatmaship' and claiming for yourself absolution from having to follow my precepts? But be that as it may now that you have called me here, you shall render me an account for all your misdeeds."

He first twitted the students for presenting their address in a foreign tongue. Nehru Committee Report had recommended that Hindustani should be the lingua franca and official language of India under swaraj. "But probably you will perhaps say, 'We are independence-wallas.' Then, I would remind you of the example of General Botha who refused to speak in English even in the presence of the King, at the time of the South African settlement, after

the Boer War, but preferred to use Dutch only, taking the help of an interpreter. That was the only thing that a representative of a freedom-loving people could do." Referring to their fripperies and their extravagant ways of living, Gandhi said: "As students of economics, you ought to know that the fees that you pay do not cover even a fraction of the amount that is spent on your education from the public exchequer. Has it ever occurred to you, my young men, as to where the rest of the money comes from? It comes from the pockets of the poor, the living skeletons of Orissa who go about with lack-lustre eyes and despair written on their face and a gnawing hunger in their stomach, from year's end to year's end, eking out their existence on a handful of rotten rice and a pinch of dirty salt flung at them by the insulting munificence of the rich Gujaratis and Marwadis? What have you done for these brethren of yours? Instead of wearing home-spun khadi prepared by the pure hands of your sisters that brings them a few additional coppers you go in for foreign stuffs, thereby helping to send sixty crores of rupees out of the country annually and to snatch away the bread from the mouths of the poor of India. The result is that the country is being ground to powder. Our commerce, instead of enriching our country, has become an instrument of our exploitation and our commercial classes have been reduced to the position of commission agents for Lancashire and Manchester, getting hardly five per cent as their share of the profits of the trade, out of which is built all the seeming magnificence of our big cities."

It was Salisbury, he continued, who had said that since India had to be bled, the lancet must be applied to the congested parts. If revenue had to be derived by the process of bleeding in Lord Salisbury's time, how much more so it must be now, when India had become poorer as a result of all these years of exploitation? They should not forget that it was out of this revenue which represented the life-blood of the Indian masses that their education was financed. Did they ever realize that the education which they received was at the expense of the degradation of their countrymen since money spent on it was derived from the notorious liquor revenue? Before God's judgement-seat, therefore, they would have to answer the dreaded question, 'What hast thou done with thine brothers?' What answer would they then make, he asked. He then proceeded to cite to them the instance of Hazrat Umar who,

when the Muslim nobles fell into luxurious ways of living and took to wearing fine clothes, asked them to take themselves away from him, saying that they were no true followers of the Prophet who did not always use bread prepared from coarse flour and wear coarse clothes. He wished that they would take a leaf out of the life of that god-fearing Caliph.

What had they to say with regard to the scandalous custom of *deti leti*? Instead of making their wives the queens of their homes and of their hearts, they had converted them into mere chattels to be bought and sold. Was this the lesson that they had imbibed from the reading of English literature? Woman had been described as the *ardhanga* or the better half of man. But they had reduced her to the position of a slave, and the result was the state of paralysis in which they found their country. Addressing the girl students Gandhi said: "As for you young girls, to you, I will only say, that if I had a girl under my charge I would rather keep her a maiden all her life than give her away to one who expected a single pice for taking her for his wife."

He concluded: "Swaraj is not meant for cowards, but for those who would mount smilingly to the gallows and refuse even to allow their eyes to be bandaged. Promise that you will wipe off the stain of *deti leti*, that you will die to restore your sisters and your wives to their full dignity and freedom. Then I shall understand that you are ready for the freedom of your country."

At the Depressed Classes' school, Gandhi had a unique experience. Here he discovered that the children did not know why the purse was presented. Some of them said that it was given to him for a picnic, to buy sweetmeats for himself. One boy insisted that he should not share them with anybody else. This led to a talk as to who Lajpat Rai was, and how he had interested himself in the cause of the Depressed Classes. He then explained to them in simple language the significance of khadi.

After four days of hectic meetings, he left Karachi to complete the rest of his Sind programme. At Jacobabad the day started with a rude shock. The sweepers' meeting had been arranged separately and he was hardly prepared for this. "You may keep back your purse and all your addresses," he bluntly told the organizers. "I am going to have a meeting with the untouchables only. Let all others who want, come and present their addresses then." At the public

meeting, in the evening, purses were presented on behalf of seven different organizations including the local barbers' panchayat. The Chamars and the bhangis too contributed their mite of Rs. 51 and many came to the meeting where they sat side by side with the orthodox Hindus.

Gandhi, while thanking in his speech the respective communities and organizations for their patriotic sentiment in presenting their purses for the Lalaji memorial, warned them against the dangers of developing a separatist tendency. Why could they not present him a single consolidated purse on behalf of all of them? Was he to infer that they could not find a single person whom they could accept as their common representative? Again, it had also been suggested to him that response to appeal for the Lalaji memorial Fund would have been more liberal if people had the assurance that at least a substantial part of the contribution would be earmarked for use in Sind itself. This suggestion clearly betrayed a narrow outlook. He wanted them to feel that in the service of India consisted the service of Sind also. He then made an impassionate appeal to the workers to prepare for the fiery ordeal that awaited them by going through the process of self-purification and purifying the Congress organization during "the present year of probation and grace".

At Sukkur, on February 12, his four-day tour of the interior of Sind began. There, to his dismay, he noticed the invasion of the villages by foreign cloth and foreign luxuries, and the prevalence of liquor habit among the Hindus. Addressing the women of Padidan, he said: "You should legitimately occupy the position of queens in your homes, but that will only be when you have rescued your menfolk from the drink habit. The curse of drink resulted in the total destruction of the Yadava dynasty to which Krishna himself belonged." He said that they had at their disposal the powerful weapon of satyagraha. If Kaikeyi could obtain all that she wanted from Dasharath by dint of *duragraha*, what could they not achieve with the help of satyagraha? Victory would assuredly be theirs if they tried and persevered to the end.

At Mirpurkhas, the Sind tour ended and the purse amounted to Rs. 70,000. On February 15, Gandhi left for Delhi where he was summoned by Motilal Nehru for the Working Committee meeting to discuss the scheme of boycott of foreign cloth through

khadi. After four hours' discussion, Gandhi's scheme was accepted and the Foreign Cloth Boycott Committee was formed, consisting of Gandhi, Motilal and Jawaharlal Nehru, Malaviya, Dr. Ansari and Azad. The Working Committee also chalked out a programme to popularize the Nehru Report.

On February 19, the Viceroy met Gandhi at the tea-party given by Vithalbhai Patel in Delhi. Among the invitees were Jinnah, Malaviya, Motilal Nehru, Sir Abdul Qaium and the Maharajas of Bikaner and Kashmir. It led to considerable speculation in the political circles. Gandhi commented: "There cannot be much breaking of ice at a private, informal tea-party. In my opinion, it cannot lead to any real advance or action unless both are ready. We know that we are not yet ready. England will never make any advance so as to satisfy India's aspirations, till she is forced to it. Such occasional parties are, therefore, good only to the extent of showing that the bringing together of parties will be easy enough when both are ready for business. The party was one of Speaker Patel's many creditable freaks."

"Besides the begging, however, I expect to do active propaganda in connection with the constructive resolution of the Congress more especially about the boycott scheme of the Working Committee," announced Gandhi on his way to Calcutta. There was a heavy programme before him and his health was still very delicate. He implored: "The enthusiasts will have pity on me. They will share with me, if they will not exclusively bear, the burden of keeping my body in good condition. Let me suggest a few don'ts. Don't give the body more than six hours' work; don't make noises at meetings or anywhere else; don't have processions; don't go for spectacular things; don't have too many engagements; don't take the body to places where there is no money or no business in terms of the objects of the tour; don't take it anywhere to satisfy anybody's whim or pride; don't take it to many places."

"It is sufficient for me to say that the boycott of foreign cloth, not merely boycott of British cloth, is, in my opinion, indispensable, if we are to attain swaraj in terms of the hungry millions," said Gandhi at the foreign cloth burning demonstration in Calcutta on March 4. He added:

"I do not want to argue out here the pros and cons of the boycott of foreign cloth through khadi. The Working Committee was fully

satisfied that this was the only thing we could possibly do if we were to go through this programme during this year, and if need be, wake up on the first of January next with the whole country as independence-wallas. I want you to pledge yourselves not before me but before your God, that henceforth you are not going to use any foreign cloth, that you are going to give up foreign clothes in your possession, that you will burn them even as you burn rags in your possession which may require to be disinfected, even as a drunkard suddenly become teetotaller empties his cupboard and destroys every bottle of brandy and whisky in his possession, no matter what it had costed him. You will count no cost too great against the cause, the liberty and honour of your country.

"But there is a fly in the ointment. I have seen a notice served upon the secretary of the provincial Congress committee which proceeds somewhat on these lines: that at this meeting, no burning of clothes should take place because it is an offence under the Police Act or Police Regulations, whatever that may be called. The clause runs after this fashion that no burning of straw or such other things can take place in or near any public street or thoroughfare. Well, I have been taxing my mind, as to whether to call this park a thoroughfare or not. Two lawyers put their heads together—I do not count myself as a lawyer, I am disbarred—they put their heads together and advised me that by no stretch of meaning could this park be called a thoroughfare. They drew my attention to another section in the act, where a public street, a public thoroughfare and a place of public resort were also mentioned. In this section the place of public resort is specifically omitted. I can well understand this park being a place of public resort.

"In this circumstance what am I to do? I accept this notice as one served upon my humble self. I do not want to avoid the consequences of this law. But, today, I do not appear before you as a breaker of law, I do not appear before you as a civil resister, I do not want you to commit at this moment a breach of any regulation. I am capable of breaking all the regulations that may hurt my moral sense, but that time is not yet for me, that time may come tomorrow, but it is not tonight. But I have got to discharge a public duty in front of you. In interpreting this law as I do or as I am advised to interpret it, I venture to submit that this notice has no effect upon me, assuming the argument that the service of

that notice upon the secretary is equal to service upon me. If I am taken before a court of law, I make this promise that I shall not raise this issue that the notice was not served upon me. I claim this is not a public thoroughfare, and also that I am not doing anything that is dangerous. It is well known that it is the settled policy of the Congress, or rather of the Working Committee. The Working Committee has got a duty to discharge. I am a member of that committee, I am the chairman of the Boycott Committee and I feel that I shall be running away from my duty if I shirk this issue and avoid a prosecution against me.

"If I am allowed to go away, I shall be going away tomorrow and I shall return on the 25th or 26th of this month to undergo and stand a prosecution against myself for having undertaken to burn foreign cloth in a public park, which I claim is not a public thoroughfare. That is the statement I wanted to make before you. You are not burning, the act of burning is by me and it will be on my sole responsibility. You are not hurt by being witnesses, I wish that you were hurt. But today the campaign is not of civil resistance but of conducting a boycott, a fierce boycott of foreign cloth, remaining as long as it is possible within the four corners of the law. I do not want you to be guilty, consciously or unconsciously, of a breach of laws of this kind, whatever some of those laws may be. You will get the opportunity if you care to obey the directions of the Working Committee when the proper time comes to break certain laws or all non-moral laws of the country. But as I have said, the time is not yet and I do not want to precipitate that time and I do not want also to anticipate that time. If the Government will play the game, if the police will play the game, I promise we shall settle our business with the Government without having to resort to civil disobedience, without the public having to resort to no-tax campaign, which is a part of civil disobedience. Speaking with a full sense of responsibility over my shoulders, I know the tremendous consequences of civil disobedience and of no-tax campaign in a vast country like this, a country which has undisciplined masses. But a man who is mad as I am now after freedom, a man who is hungry after freedom—and a real hunger for freedom is infinitely more painful than hunger for bread—has got to take tremendous risks, to stake everything he has in order to gain that precious freedom. Although I am on the threshold

of death, I want to see swaraj whilst I have still breath in me—that I want to take all those risks. At the same time I want to take every precaution and, therefore, I shall plead with the Government and the powers that be, I shall ask them to come to their senses.

"But if you alone will help me, we shall be able to avoid all these risks and still find the dawn of freedom breaking upon us, before the 31st of December next.

"If you carry out honestly, faithfully and completely the programme that will be set before you from time to time, I promise no heroic measures will be necessary to be taken by you. Is boycott of foreign cloth such a heroic measure? Is the putting of the Congress house in order such a heroic measure? Is the registering of thousands of members for the Congress or the habitual wearing of khadi a heroic act? If you think these are heroic acts I can tell you that you do not know what heroic acts are; heroic acts are made of sterner stuff. These easy things have been placed before you for the simple reason that you are millions against one hundred thousand men.

"If we were not under the spell of hypnotism, or if we were not being acted upon by that great force inertia, or want of self-confidence, we would find it most natural to breathe the air of freedom which is ours to breathe. If we were not under this hypnotic spell, we need not have to go through even these easy stages. No violence must be used so long as you want to have me as a participator in this ceremony. I swear by non-violence, my creed. I can see no other way open to me to regain my freedom.

"The sole responsibility for this act of burning is entirely on my shoulders—please remember that we want the boycott of foreign clothes and not merely of British clothes. I do not want to go into the question of the Indian mills; they will take care of themselves if you will take care of khadi."

As soon as the bonfire was lighted the police with their big sticks shoved out the crowd and put out the fire. The police then arrested Gandhi for disobeying an order under the Calcutta Police Act. He excused himself from signing the bond to appear before the Chief Presidency Magistrate on the morning of March 5, by saying that he could not take the responsibility of disappointing thousands of people in Burma. "Let the Government take the responsibility by taking charge of me," he said. The Commissioner of Police, Charles

Tegart, deferred the prosecution till his return from Burma, and Gandhi exchanged the courtesy by giving an undertaking that till the case was decided, there should be no burning of foreign cloth in Calcutta public squares.

"Let me make it clear that this does not mean a stoppage of boycott or even of burning foreign cloth," said Gandhi. "The undertaking means that pending the authoritative interpretation of this particular section of the Police Act there should be no burning in Calcutta public squares and naturally in the public streets of Calcutta. But whenever it is considered necessary and whenever the Congress authorities so decide, they will not hesitate to burn collected foreign cloth in private places or in places that manifestly do not come under the section in question even in accordance with the interpretation sought to be placed upon it by the police.

"I shall be very much surprised, indeed, if after the unwarranted and premature interference by the police with the demonstration at the Shraddhanand Park, the people do not discard all foreign cloth and complete the boycott. The most effective answer to this interference would be for the people in mofussil and the people of other provinces to collect all the foreign clothes available and consign them to the flames. I have given many an anxious hour to this question of burning foreign cloth. I know some friends differ from me, but if it is a fact that foreign cloth means the largest drain on the country's resources and the enforced pauperization of the starving millions, then this foreign cloth charged as it is with such poisonous germs deserved only to be destroyed."

Gandhi's arrest gave an impetus to the movement and all over the country bonfire of foreign cloth was lighted. In the House of Commons, Earl Winterton, Under-secretary of State for India, said that Gandhi was merely informed that he would be prosecuted for burning foreign cloth in a public square. He further added: "There is no new political situation as such and the house may rest assured that the Government of Bengal will enforce ordinary law against those attempting to break it, whether they be political leaders or their dupes."

"He who runs may see that a new political situation has undoubtedly arisen in India by the reason of high-handed action by the police," said Gandhi. "It will depend upon the public workers to demonstrate the strength of the new situation."

Gandhi sailed for Rangoon as a deck passenger on the morning of March 5. A deputation consisting of twelve representatives of the principal communities in Burma were on the boat before she steamed into the wharf where a grand reception awaited him. For many hours during the day, crowds waited at the house of Dr. P. J. Mehta, Gandhi's host and old friend.

The Burmese people were anxious to learn from Gandhi the new technique of struggle against foreign domination and exploitation. The citizens' address welcomed him "as a noble son of great India whose children many of us are, or from whom many of us have received our religion and our culture, and as an exponent of non-violent non-co-operation, which you have once again unfolded before the world as proof against all violence." The phoongyis who welcomed him in one of their great monasteries were happy in the thought that they had in their midst one who revered their great Master and his central teaching, and hoped that they might have occasions to work with him for a common cause. U Paw Tun, welcoming Gandhi on behalf of the hundreds of phoongyis and many thousands of Burmans gathered at the Shwe Dagon or the Golden Pagoda, said that Gandhi was by his noble example paving the way for the freedom of India and Burma.

His principal mission was to go about with the begging bowl to the Indians in Burma: "To the Burmans I have come to give what it is in my power to give them. To you, Gujaratis particularly, and the other Indians in general, I have come to appeal to share your substance with the hungering millions of India." His most stirring appeals for funds were reserved for the Gujaratis. "Scrap this list of subscriptions and start afresh," he said, when he was told that the collections amounted to Rs. 40,000. "Remember that I expect not only the Gujaratis but the Bengalis, the Punjabis, and the Tamilians to give me as much as they can, though I will surely dig my hands deeper into the Gujaratis' pockets than into those of others. The chettis who deal in crores and have lakhs of rupees worth of property may not disregard my claim. Let them not forget that I also belong to their class, I am a Gujarati chetti. I ask you to remember that it is after fourteen years that I am visiting Burma. You do not mind even a famine coming once in fourteen years and try to face it as bravely as you can. I hope that you will satisfy the hunger, to the best of your ability, of this representative

of Daridranarayan, who may never again be in the midst of you." The appeal brought over Rs. 80,000. The most noteworthy share of the collections was that contributed by the humble people, the Oriyas and the Gorakhpuris, who had sent a message to him to include their associations in his itinerary as they feared that their small contribution might not commend itself to the organizers.

The addresses were, at all places, in Burmese, English translations being sometimes read and sometimes submitted to Gandhi for his perusal. At Pangde, absence of a suitable interpreter presented considerable difficulty, which was ultimately got over by distributing a Burmese version of Gandhi's speech, which he later wrote out for them. At Mandalay, he was agreeably surprised to find a Muslim interpreter who translated his Hindustani speech into excellent Burmese. Gandhi, however, regretted the fact that there were very few Indians who had mastered the Burmese language. Part of the message he left for the Indians in Burma was: "The least that the Indians owe to the Burmans is that they should try to come close to them by learning their language and I would suggest to the Indians to teach the children Burmese, even if they find it too late themselves now to do so."

An important function during the visit was the civic address at Rangoon. For the first time in history its corporation voted an address to a public man. The felicitous address reminded Gandhi of his pleasant experiences in Ceylon. "Many Buddhists in Ceylon, as if by instinct, claimed me as their own. Undoubtedly, if the Buddhists of Ceylon, Burma, China and Japan would claim me as their own, I should appropriate that honour readily, because I know that Buddhism is to Hinduism what Protestantism is to Roman Catholicism, only in much stronger light, and in a much greater degree."

The corporation address referred with pride to the rapid progress made by the city of Rangoon during the past fifteen years. Gandhi asked the members not to be deluded by the apparent progress: "I only hope that this great progress of your metropolis is a true reflection of the progress of the Burmese peasantry in the interior. It is sad for me to have to confess to you that the vast progress, which to an onlooker the great cities of India seem to have made is by no means a true indication or any indication whatsoever of the progress of the peasantry of India." Defining the functions

of an ideal municipality he said: "There is a significant expression for municipal corporation in my mother tongue—*kachrapati*, which means 'scavenging department', and a municipality is nothing if it is not a premier scavenging department embracing all spheres of public and social life of a city, but also the internal sanitation of its citizens."

A large number of Burmans who formed part of the seething mass of humanity under the shadow of the Golden Pagoda were the phoongyis who were taking a leading part in politics. In a brief message to the phoongyis Gandhi said: "I was glad to find you telling me that the phoongyis were leading the political movement in Burma, but you have a serious responsibility upon your shoulders when you undertake to lead the political battle. History shows that the priesthood has not always interfered with political matters to the benefit of mankind. Very often unworthy ambition has moved the priesthood of the world, as it has moved unscrupulous men to take part in politics, and if now you phoongyis aspire to lead the political movement of this, one of the fairest lands on the face of the earth, you are shouldering a tremendous responsibility. I would ask you not only to be pure beyond suspicion, but I would ask you to combine with stainless purity great wisdom and great ability. May the spirit of Buddha under whose shadow we are now seated guide every one connected with the movement."

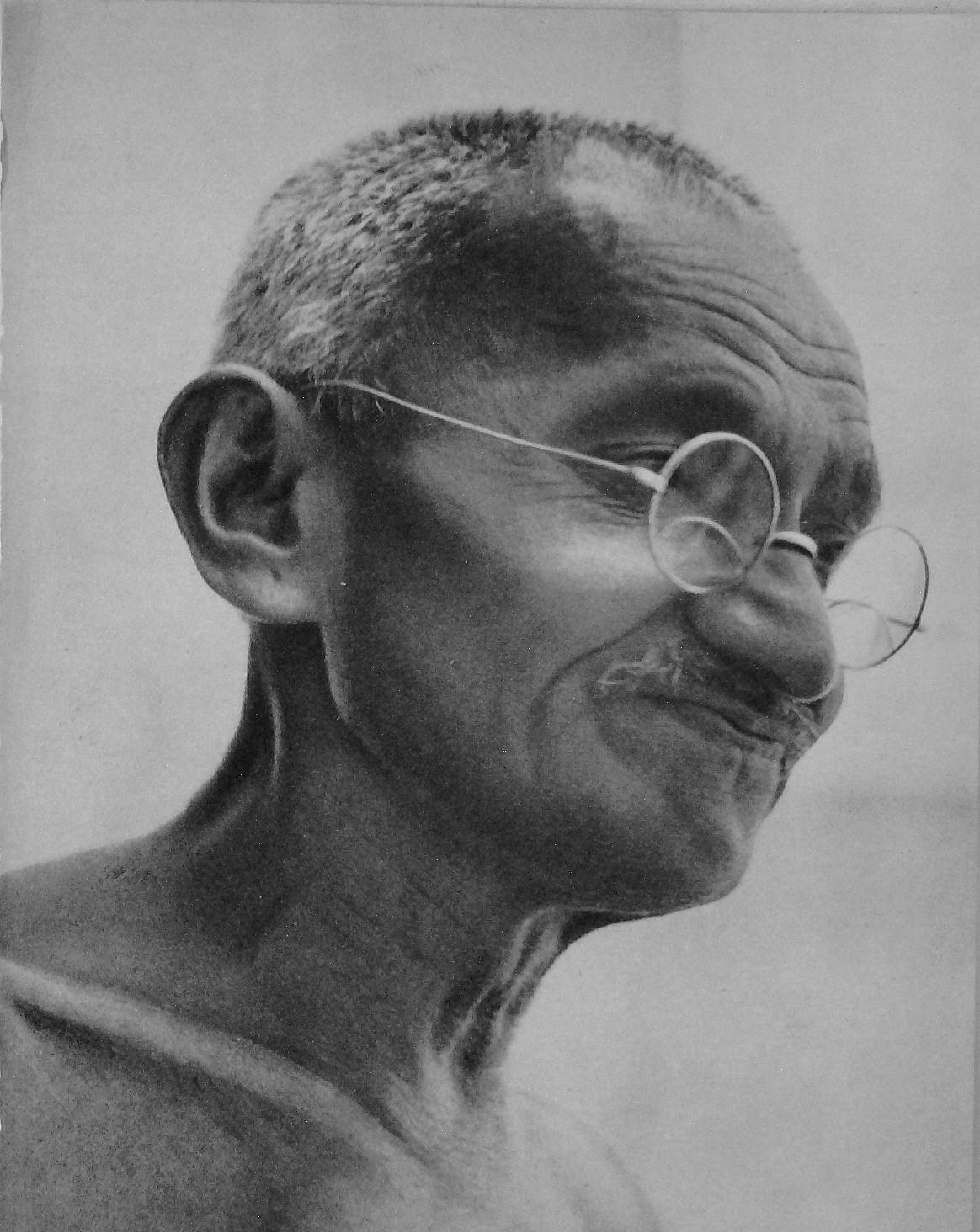
After the inspiring scene at the Golden Pagoda in Rangoon, he was taken to what was understood to be an amateur performance, where he was to receive Rs. 2,000 from the proceeds of the show. He was surprised to find himself in a theatre where only professional actors were singing and dancing. He had not, on principle, visited theatres. "Perhaps you do not know," he said, "that at the time of the Tilak Swaraj Fund collection, I was offered fifty thousand rupees as subscription to the fund if only I would visit a professional performance for ten minutes. But I declined. It is not that I disdain to mix with and move among the professional actors' world, for there is no class of humanity with which I do not claim kinship; but a person in my position has necessarily to guide his conduct not merely with reference to himself but also to the effect that his example might have on others. Whatever may be the pros and cons of going to the public theatre, it is a fact that it has undermined the morals and ruined the character of

many a youth in this country. You, grown-up people, may regard yourselves immune from insidious effects of the theatre on yourselves, but you ought to have regard for your little children whose innocence you expose to an unconscionable strain by taking them to questionable performances. Look around you. We are situated in the midst of a raging fire. The cinema, the stage, the race-course, the drink booth, and the opium den—all these enemies of society that have sprung up under the fostering influence of the present system threaten us on all sides. Is it any wonder then that I have not hesitated to call the present system satanic? My advice to you is, beware of pitfalls.

"You members of the histrionic profession, you may if you like continue to follow your avocation, but preserve your purity. God will take care of you. A labourer is always worthy of his hire."

In one of the meetings in Rangoon, Gandhi made a significant speech, outlining his philosophy of life: "I am not able just now to appreciate, much less to assimilate the compliments you have paid me. But I could certainly claim two things of which you have made kind mention. The first thing that my mission is not merely brotherhood of Indian humanity. My mission is not merely freedom of India, though today it undoubtedly engrosses practically the whole of my life and the whole of my time. But through realization of freedom of India, I hope to realize and carry on the mission of brotherhood of man. My patriotism is not an exclusive thing. It is all-embracing and I should reject that patriotism which sought to mount upon the distress or exploitation of other nationalities. The conception of my patriotism is nothing, if it is not in every case without exception consistent with the broadest good of humanity at large. Not only that but my religion and my patriotism derived from my religion embrace all life. I want to realize brotherhood or identity not merely with the beings called human, but I want to realize identity with all life, even with such beings as crawl on earth. I want, if I don't give you a shock, to realize identity with even the crawling things upon earth, because we claim common descent from the same God, and that being so, all life in whatever form can safely claim all the credit that you may choose to give me in describing my mission of brotherhood of man.

"You have kindly asked me to give the indigenous population of Burma some advice. I must own to you that I regard myself as

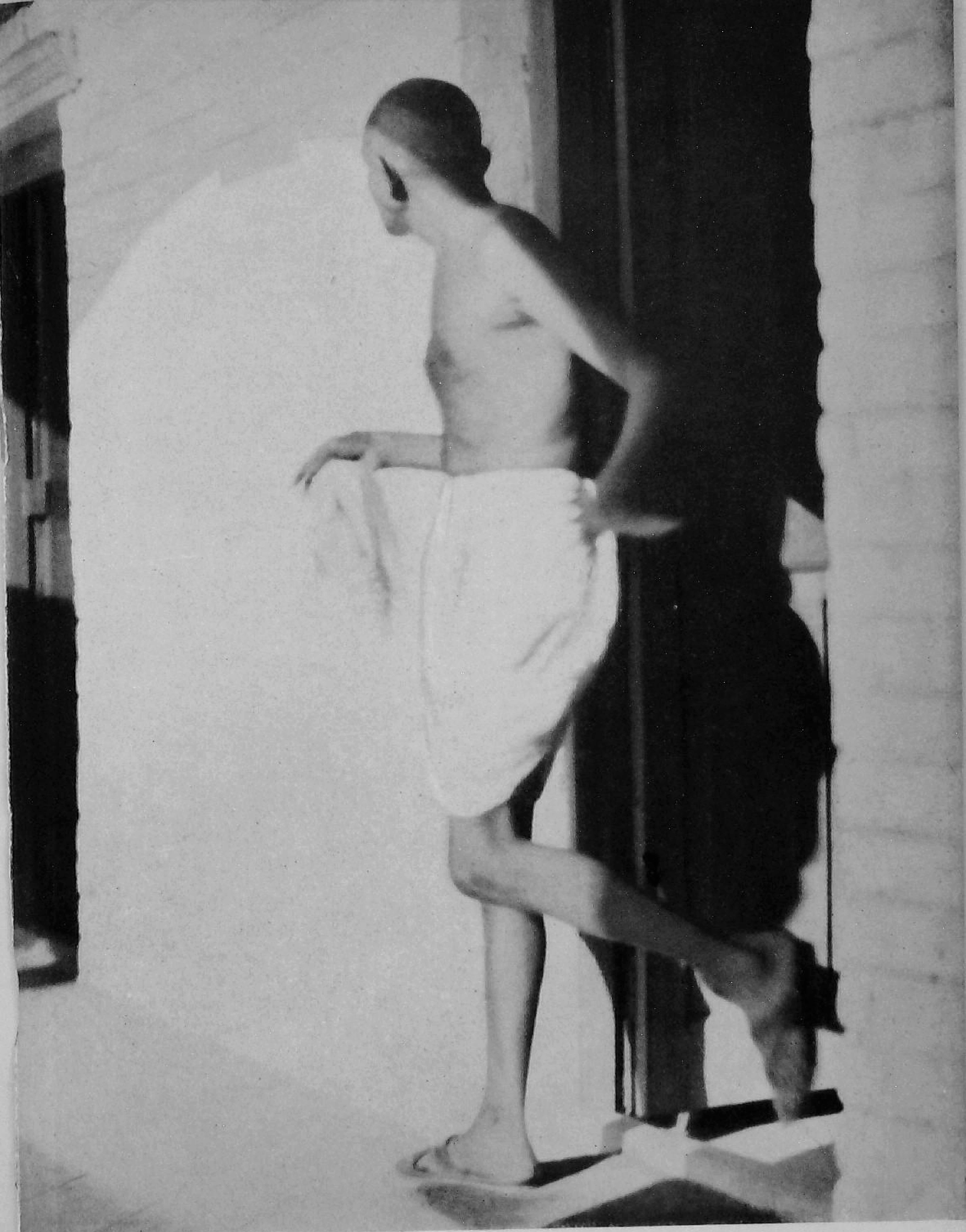


Photograph : Counsic Bros.

Gandhi, 1929

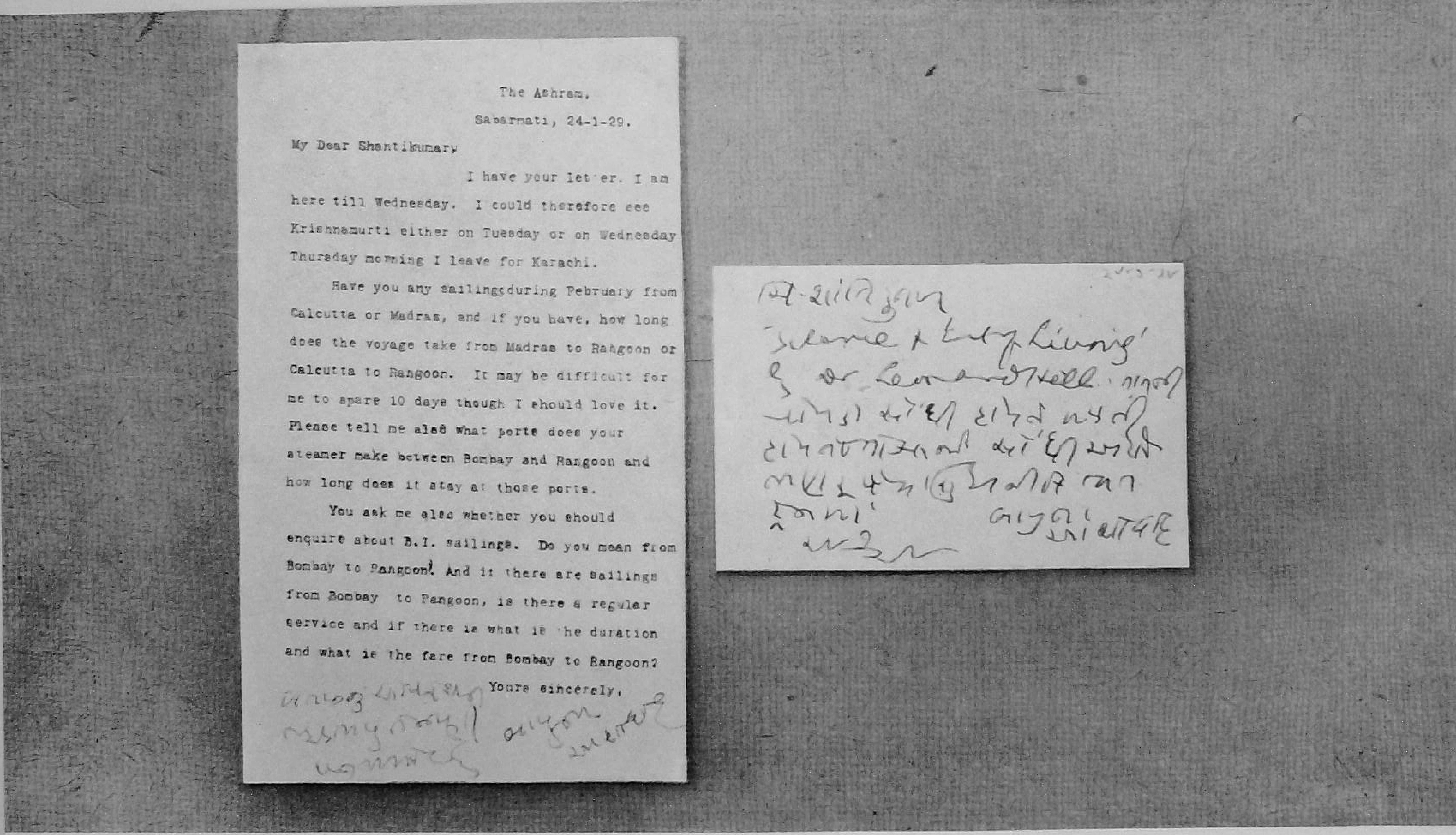
*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi with his ashram workers, 1929
Plying his *takli* at a public meeting, 1929



Photograph : Counsic Bros.

Gandhi disturbed, emerging from his room in the ashram, 1929



The Ashram,

Sabarmati, 24-1-29.

My Dear Shantikumar,

I have your letter. I am here till Wednesday. I could therefore see Krishnamurti either on Tuesday or on Wednesday Thursday morning I leave for Karachi.

Have you any sailings during February from Calcutta or Madras, and if you have, how long does the voyage take from Madras to Rangoon or Calcutta to Rangoon. It may be difficult for me to spare 10 days though I should love it. Please tell me also what ports does your steamer make between Bombay and Rangoon and how long does it stay at those ports.

You ask me also whether you should enquire about B.I. sailings. Do you mean from Bombay to Rangoon? And if there are sailings from Bombay to Rangoon, is there a regular service and if there is what is the duration and what is the fare from Bombay to Rangoon?

Yours sincerely,

*Courtesy : Shantikumar Morarjee*

Gandhi's letter of inquiry on the eve of his departure for Burma, 1929

His request for a book " not costing more than Rs. 3 "

altogether unfit for giving you any advice. My study of your great traditions is merely superficial. My study of your present-day problem is still more superficial, although I yield to none in my love and admiration for you. I wish that the different parties in Burma could meet me and I could gain access to your hearts. My heart is there open to receive you, but it is for you to call and certainly that call will not be in vain."

The secretary of the All-Burmese Association complained that the Indian capitalists were helping European exploitation and that the Indians were indifferent to the Burman movement for emancipation. Gandhi said that even India was not free from blacklegs, people who while eating the country's salt betrayed the country. And, therefore, even if the behaviour of a section of Indians was as it was described, they had no reason to harbour bitter feelings against India. They had no cause whatever to worry because even if the entire local Indian community adopted an unjust attitude towards Burma, India would never countenance it.

It was not only Rangoon that lionized Gandhi. At every place in Burma, he was welcomed with great enthusiasm. As the train went round the coast line from Rangoon to Moulmein, the crowds came at all hours of the night to have a sight of the Mahatma. In Moulmein, Paungde, Prome, and all along the way north up to Mandalay, the meetings were packed with Burmese men and women, dressed in their silken *pasos* and *temeins*. The response to the appeal for Daridranarayan was generous. "Money-gifts are hardly ever a sure indication of love," he said. "In fact in our epics we have the story often told of God refusing the richest presents from those having great possessions, and preferring to eat the coarse morsel lovingly given by a devotee. But it is my great misfortune that I have to measure your love by the money-gifts you give for Daridranarayan. It is hardly fair to you, I know, but no matter in whatever balance you were weighed, you have simply refused to be found wanting. The excess of your love can only teach me to be more humble and more worthy of it."

At Moulmein over 5,000 peasants had come from neighbouring islands to listen to Gandhi. At Thaton thousands of Burmese had gathered to pay their homage and the Chinese on behalf of the local branch of Kuomintang also presented an address to him. At all places the Burmese leaders uttered a note of protest against

the talk of separation from India. At Paungde the address emphasized the fact of Indians and Burmese belonging to the same stock. "Though the Hindus and Burmese reside far from each other, they are the descendants of the same stock; for, King Abhiraja of the Shakya clan of India founded the first kingdom at Taguang about eighty-eight Buddhist Era. From this it can be seen that Indians and Burmans were brethren and as such inseparable."

At Moulmein, Gandhi presented the argument for the spinning wheel as a direct corollary to the law of ahimsa and of the duty to neighbours that Buddha had preached. "Those who believe in teaching of the Buddha, as you do, cannot afford to pass a single moment in idleness. The great nature has intended us to earn our bread in the sweat of our brow. Every one, therefore, who idles away a single minute becomes to the extent a burden upon his neighbours, and to do so is to commit a breach of the first lesson of ahimsa. Ahimsa is nothing if not a well-balanced exquisite consideration for one's neighbour, and an idle man is wanting in that elementary consideration. The remedy that I commend to you for the deplorable state of things is the same as I have commended to my countrymen in India. You have got enough weavers in this beautiful land. But instead of working for the good of the nation, they are slaving away for a foreign capitalist, because it is to foreign yarn that they are applying their skill and workmanship. If you will avoid helplessness, become self-contained and happy, and not become semi-starved as we in India are, you will take my word and revert to the spinning wheel, while there is still time."

At Prome he reverted to the same theme. "I have no other and no better guidance to offer to you than to commend to your attention the general principle of non-violence, in other words self-purification. How and in what manner it can be applied will depend upon evils that exist in your midst. But let me single out at least one thing. It seems to me that the conditions of your agriculture are almost the same as those in India. As I was driving to Prome, I passed through a village which was predominantly a weavers' village. All the looms there are working with foreign yarn and, therefore, have no living contact whatsoever with peasantry. I have now become well aware that there was a time when all these beautiful *lungis* were made out of hand-spun yarn. The spinning wheel which you manufacture in the place is from an artistic

standpoint superior to any Indian spinning wheel. On the whole, it is cheaper than Indian wheels and probably lighter to work with. God has blessed this land with an abundance of bamboo, and all you have to do is to carry the message of the wheel to the peasantry and revive this beautiful art of hand-spinning, and I would ask the municipalities of Burma to make a commencement in municipal schools and carry the message through them to the villagers. Weavers will then be working on behalf of the poor villagers. Whereas if they remain dependent on foreign yarn, not only will they remain isolated from village life, but it will be a question of time when they will be extinct as weavers. For it is the tendency of the weaving mills to consume all the yarn that the spinning mills produce. If, therefore, you will establish a living connection with the villages—of weavers with villages and of townsfolk with villagers—you can do so only through the spinning wheel."

On the eve of his departure, Gandhi spoke with great emotion in Mandalay: "You have rightly reminded me that it was here in Mandalay that the great son of India, Lokamanya Tilak, was buried alive. It was he who gave India the mantra of swaraj and in burying him alive, British Government had buried India alive. The Lion of the Punjab also was similarly incarcerated here, and lest we should forget those things, Government recently buried alive Subhas Bose and numerous other sons of Bengal. Mandalay is thus a place of pilgrimage for us Indians, and it is a remarkable coincidence that we are all sitting here today in the shadow of the walls of the fort and the prison sanctified by those sons of India. In India it is a common saying that the way to swaraj is through Mandalay, and the British Government has taught you too that great lesson by incarcerating India's great sons here. The way to swaraj is the way of suffering—indeed no country has come to its own without suffering—and let Mandalay be an eternal reminder both to you and to us of that great truth."

## *Thunder In The Air*

1929

DURING the fortnight that Gandhi was away in Burma a new situation arose in India. On March 20, 1929, the Government struck suddenly at organized labour by arresting some of its most prominent leaders of the advanced group. The leaders of the Bombay Girni Kamgar Union were picked, as well as labour leaders from Bengal, U.P. and the Punjab. Some of these were communists and their sympathizers, the rest were just trade-unionists. Thirty-one persons were arrested on a charge of conspiracy "to deprive His Majesty of his sovereignty of India", and they were brought to remote Meerut. The alleged reason for the choice of this out-of-the-way place was that a conference of the Workers' and Peasants' Party was held here in 1928, but the real reason was that, unlike in Bombay or Calcutta, at Meerut the trial could take place before a district judge and five assessors. All applications for transference to a High Court were refused and the Meerut trial lasted for four years and a half.

Gandhi's comment on the situation was: "The arrests of labour leaders or so-called communists show that the Government is in a panicky state and is betraying the symptoms to which we have been used and which presage a period of terrorism. Evidently it believes in a periodical exhibition of its capacity to supersede all law and to discover to a trembling India the red claws which usually remain under cover. Of course, the farce of a trial will be enacted. If the accused are wise, they will not run into the trap and assist the farce by being represented by counsel. But they will boldly risk imprisonment. Presently, it will be the turn of thousands not merely to risk but to face and court imprisonment, if this reign of lawlessness under the guise of law is to be ended once for all.

"It seems to me that the motive behind these prosecutions is not to kill communism, it is to strike terror. If by communism is meant

seizure of power and property by violent means, public opinion was successfully fighting that demon. The Congress creed, indeed the creed of all political parties, is attainment of freedom through non-violent means. But the Government by its action has given a strength to the cult of violence which it never possessed. They are shrewd enough to know that such was bound to be the case. The motive behind these arrests has, therefore, to be searched in another direction. One thing is certain. Terrorism like plague has lost its terror for the public. The movement of swaraj has found too deep a root in the public mind to be shaken or destroyed. It is bound to gain strength through these arrests and other similar indications of the Government's intention to strike a death-blow at the liberty movement. For, the prosecution of Sambamurti and Khadilkar, the proscription of Sundarlal's volumes, the police conduct at the Shraddhanand Park and such other incidents that may have escaped my notice cumulatively point in but one direction. . . The Government are by such acts providing us with easy methods of civil disobedience should it be necessary for us next year to undertake it on a large scale."

On his return from Burma, on March 24, Gandhi addressed a huge meeting in Calcutta. In response to his appeal to give up all foreign cloth, a shower of cloth fell for ten minutes. The huge pile was removed to private premises and was burnt. On March 27 Gandhi with four colleagues appeared before the Chief Presidency Magistrate to face trial on charge of lighting a bonfire of foreign cloth at the Shraddhanand Park, on March 4. The magistrate declared the park to be a public thoroughfare and fined the accused one rupee each which was paid by some one without Gandhi's knowledge. "Whoever had paid the fine could not be a friend," Gandhi commented.

"I was unprepared for the court's justification of the conduct of the police," he said. "It was its duty to condemn the action of the police in creating a disturbance they did in the face of my clearest possible statement that in seeking to light the bonfire, I was not acting as civil resister but in the bona fide belief that the section in question did not apply to places like the Shraddhanand Park. As it is, the police have received a certificate of good conduct for their rowdyism. It was well that the case was fought as a test case. For without it, the demonstration in the Shraddhanand

Park would have been impossible. The high-handed action of the police gave the boycott movement an advertisement and an encouragement it would never otherwise have had. The police are welcome to their certificate of good conduct." The day of trial was marked by bonfires of foreign cloth all over the country.

Sensational developments followed. The Government were eager to rush the Public Safety Bill through the assembly, but President Patel, on April 2, proposed that the bill should be postponed till the Meerut trial had concluded or the prosecution was withdrawn, as the discussion of the bill could not proceed without referring to matter which was *sub judice*. "I do not think, in these circumstances, I can legitimately allow Government to proceed further with this bill at this stage." The Government refused to accept the plea to postpone the bill. On April 8, when the Trades Disputes Bill was passed by the Assembly by 56 votes to 38 and President Patel rose to give his ruling on the Public Safety Bill, two bombs along with red pamphlets, entitled *Hindustan Socialist Republic Army Notice*, were thrown from visitors' gallery near the seat of Sir George Schuster, the Finance Member. There was suffocating smoke and noise but no member was seriously hurt. Sir John Simon was sitting in the President's gallery. The bombs were intended "to make noise and create a stir, not to injure". The house dispersed at once in panic. Two young men were arrested, Bhagat Singh from the Punjab and Batukeshwar Dutt from Bengal, domiciled in Cawnpore.

The chamber was guarded when the assembly met again to hear Patel's ruling on the Public Safety Bill. He ruled the bill out of order, saying that the Government's attitude was a challenge to the chair. On April 12 the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, delivered an address to a joint sitting of both houses. He referred to the bomb incident and to the president's ruling, announced his decision to issue an ordinance embodying the Public Safety Bill and to secure amendment of the rules to prevent the president of either house from interrupting the normal legislative procedure.

"The bomb-throwers have discredited the cause of freedom in whose name they threw the bombs," commented Gandhi. "The Government would be foolish if they become nervous and resort to counter madness. If they are wise, they will see that they are in no small measure to blame for the madness of the bomb-thrower. By their indifference to popular feeling, they are exasperating the

nation and the exasperation is bound to lead some astray. Congressmen whose creed is non-violence will do well not to give even secret approval to the deed but pursue their own method with redoubled vigour, if they have faith in it. The bomb has no milieu in India. Government can stop it today if they choose, not by frightfulness but by conceding the national demand gracefully and in time. But that is hoping against hope. For the Government to do so would be a change of heart, not merely of policy. There is nothing on the horizon to warrant the hope that any such change is imminent."

Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt were both sentenced to transportation for life at the trial held in Delhi on June 12. In the course of a spirited statement, they said that bombs were thrown not with the object of taking life but to draw the world's attention to the conditions in India. The assembly, they said, was specially chosen for this demonstration, as it had been used by the Government repeatedly to flout the national demand and it had become a symbol of India's humiliation and helplessness. Their long statement said:

"We have been ruminating upon this and upon the wholesale arrests of leaders of the labour movement. When the introduction of the Trades Disputes Bill brought us into the assembly to watch its progress and the course of the debate, it only served to confirm our conviction that the labouring millions of India had nothing to expect from the institution that stood as a menacing monument to the strangling power of the exploiters and the serfdom of the helpless labourers.

"And none who has felt like us for the dumb driven drudges of labourers could possibly witness such a spectacle with equanimity. None whose heart bleeds for those who give their life-blood in silence to the building up of the economic structure of the exploiter, of whom Government happens to be the biggest in this country, could repress the cry of the soul in agonizing anguish. We dropped the bombs on the floor of the assembly to register our protest on behalf of those who had no other means left to give expression to their heart-rending agony. Our sole purpose was 'to make the deaf hear' and to give the heedless a timely warning.

"Others have as keenly felt as we have done and from under the seeming sereneness of the sea of Indian humanity a veritable storm is about to break out. We have only hoisted the danger-signal

to warn those, who are speeding along without heeding the grave dangers. We have only marked the end of the era of utopian non-violence of whose futility the rising generation has been convinced beyond the shadow of a doubt.

"Revolution is the inalienable right of mankind. Freedom is the imprescriptible birthright of all. The labourer is the real sustainer of society. The sovereignty of the people is the ultimate destiny of workers. For these ideals and for this faith, we shall welcome any suffering to which we may be condemned. To the altar of revolution we have brought our youth as incense, for no sacrifice is too great for so magnificent a cause. We are content. We await the advent of revolution. Long live revolution."

There was thunder in the air and the Government were panicky. A strike of over 150,000 textile workers in Bombay commenced in April and lasted for six months. There were strikes in the Tata Iron & Steel Works at Jamshedpur, on the East Indian Railways, in the jute mills of Bengal, among the scavengers of Calcutta and other municipal workers. The Government launched repression, arrests, searches and confiscation of literature. The officials had lost their nerves and they had feared a rising on the anniversary day of the Revolt of 1857. The city of Meerut presented an extraordinary sight on May 9. There were troops and police everywhere and no one could enter or leave the city without the closest scrutiny. In May and June journals like *Forward* and *Modern Review* became targets of official displeasure. Ramananda Chatterji, the veteran editor of *Modern Review*, was arrested on a charge of sedition for publishing *India in Bondage* by Dr. Sunderland. "This arrest is a forcible proof of Dr. Sunderland's indictment of British Rule," said Gandhi. A special law entitled the Bengal Ordinance was issued to enable the Government to arrest and to keep in jail without trial any one they chose to suspect. Subhas Chandra Bose and many other prominent Congressmen were prosecuted on the flimsiest ground.

In Bengal, U.P. and the Punjab there was recrudescence of the terrorist activity. Several conspiracy cases were launched, and the number of detenus rapidly increased. In the meantime the Punjab police had been instrumental in producing for trial a number of persons, including Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt, who, it was alleged, had been engaged in widespread terrorist conspiracy,

such as, the manufacture of bombs at Lahore, Saharanpur, Agra and Calcutta, dacoity for political purposes in Bihar and Orissa and the murder of Mr. Saunders in Lahore. This case was known as the Lahore Conspiracy Case.

In this case some extraordinary scenes were enacted in the court by the police. As a protest against the treatment given to them in court and in prison, there was a hunger-strike on the part of the prisoners. The hunger-strike went on from week to week, creating a stir in the country. Owing to physical weakness of the accused, they could not be taken to court, and the proceedings had to be adjourned repeatedly. The Government thereupon initiated legislation, popularly known as the Hunger-Strike Bill, to allow court proceedings to continue even in the absence of the accused or his counsel. For over two months, Bhagat Singh, Dutt and Jatin Das were on hunger-strike over the treatment of political prisoners. On September 13, Jatin Das died on the sixty-first day of his hunger-strike. This was followed by a mass demonstration of 500,000 in Calcutta and mammoth processions all over the country.

There was a new spirit all over the country and Gandhi dropped ominous hints of a struggle: "A man who is made for freedom has got to take tremendous risks and stake everything." But his programme was the same. "My message to the villagers is identical: boycott all foreign cloth; wear khaddar manufactured in your own villages; banish untouchability; promote unity between Hindus, Muslims, Christians and others; banish drink, let the village elders go to the drinkers and reason with them to give up drink. Avoid internal quarrels, but when they do occur adjust them through voluntary village panchayats."

His tour of Andhra began on April 6. "There is hesitation and fear to pass criticism where criticism is needed and you share the common national frailty of whitewashing every blemish," he said to the people. "I would be untrue to you if I did not during this year of grace, of discipline and probation, warn you against these faults, and exhort you to remove them to the best of your capacity."

"We are clean as individuals but not as members of the society or the nation of which the individual is but the tiny part," he wrote referring to the scene he had witnessed while crossing the Krishna river. "The car practically passed by hundreds of men

and women evacuating themselves not many yards from the river bank. It is the stream in which the people bathe and from which they drink. Here there was a breach of the code of decency and criminal disregard of the most elementary laws of health. Add to this the economic waste of precious manure which they would be if these evacuations were made in a field and buried in the living surface of the earth and well mixed with loosened soil, instead of being filth and danger to the health of citizens, as they are when deposited on the river banks. I venture to submit that conservation of national sanitation is swaraj work and may not be postponed for a single day on any consideration whatsoever. If swaraj is to be had by peaceful methods, it will only be attained by attention to every little detail of national life. Such work will promote cohesion among workers and create an indissoluble bond between them and the people—a bond necessary for the overthrow of the existing system of Government. The system depends for its existence upon the weaknesses of the nation. If there are no weaknesses to exploit, it will automatically cease to exist."

Gandhi discouraged praise and flattery and warned his admirers against framing their addresses in hyperboles. "The best form of praise is to adopt in one's own conduct what one finds praiseworthy in another," he said. "I can profit by criticism, never by praise." He invited statistical details in the addresses: "Number of men and women in each village or in the area covered by the particular address; number of Hindus, Muslims and others; number of untouchables and their condition; number of Congress members male and female; number of people given to drink; number of spinners, their hours of work, earnings, quantity and count of yarn turned out per month; quantity of cotton grown if any, whether spinners do their own carding, number of looms weaving hand-spun and number weaving mill-spun yarn; number of national schools and attendance, and such other information as may be of use from the national standpoint. Addresses giving accurate information on the points mentioned would be a record I should treasure. They would be for me a mine of valuable information."

A typical address was presented by the factory workers: "It was in the year 1916, we could see for the first time our cotton being ginned by foreign mechanism driven by steam-power. Our factory can now gin the produce of twenty villages and a limited number

of us are allowed to work. About the year 1920, when you were beginning to revive hand-spinning in storm-beaten and almost worn-out northern India, there were few among agricultural and labour classes in these parts who could buy cloth for daily use. Eight years have rolled by. Mill yarn has appeared in the market. Its cheapness and evenness have attracted us. Self-spinning has lost its importance. We have come to the stage of buying cloth, woven mainly out of mill yarn by local weavers majority of whom come from the suppressed. We still consider mill cloth and foreign cloth to be a matter of luxury only fit to be used by Brahmin and Vaishya communities. We have still belief in the quality of khadi cloth and always prefer that if available at a reasonable price. We use in these parts eight-spoke charkha with an iron axis, all complete, costing Rs.6. Fortunately your visit to these parts has happened in a spinning season. You can see some of the villagers still plying their charkhas. Strikes, A.-I.S.A., the Congress, swaraj, Hindu-Muslim question—these are all words or phrases, we, the villagers, in general do not understand. None try to explain them for us, nor are we literate enough to know them. We have all assembled here to request you to accept our few coppers which may be of use in your public work and samples of cotton and its product for your information about the qualities available here. We further demand your prayer to Almighty for our sound health, so that we may daily labour to earn our bread honestly."

On many an occasion the addresses evoked a corrective comment from Gandhi. One address suggested that khadi should not be sold through middlemen but manufactured by each one for himself. "I like this counsel of perfection," he said. "Only it betrays ignorance of practical facts about khadi production. It is a physical impossibility for everybody to produce his own khadi just as it is impossible for every man to grow his own rice. And I cannot understand the philosophy lying behind the remark, 'Wear either your own khadi or foreign cloth.' Let it be known that there are millions in India who can work at the spinning wheel for eight hours a day and that it is impossible for them to use all the khadi woven therefrom. It is the bounden duty of all good citizens in India to take off the surplus product that is turned out by these brothers and sisters of theirs. Let us not also forget that it is man's social nature which distinguished him from the brute. If it

is his privilege to be independent, it is equally his duty to be interdependent. Only an arrogant man will claim to be independent of everybody else and be self-contained. But let me in all humility point out to the framers of these addresses that the movement of 'self-contained' system of khadi production is going on in several places in India and if the municipalities, the taluk boards and district boards will do their duty and come to assistance, it will be possible to reconstruct our villagers so that the villages collectively, not the villagers individually, will become self-contained so far as their clothing requirements are concerned. It is for that reason that I have said times without number that when khadi becomes current coin in India, it will have nothing to fear—the competition of foreign cloth or even of Indian mill-made cloth."

Gandhi knew the people of Andhra since the memorable campaigns in South Africa and, therefore, he was frankest with them. "Your bravery is unquestioned," he said, "but unfortunately those who are in a position to render a good account of themselves to the nation are far more eager to lead than to serve." Their amazing self-sacrifice and generosity was not new to him. He cautioned the workers against extravagance. "It is not enough that the workers do not use money for self, it is wrong when they use it carelessly for purposes not intended." The women's contribution particularly pleased him immensely. At one meeting a poor old woman put into his hands four annas. Immediately after, a khadi-clad woman gave him five rupees and a copper. Gandhi asked her: "Whose donation is greater, yours or this old sister's?" But pat came the reply: "Both are equal." He was nonplussed. She further added: "I have been interested in the national movement for many years. I have always contributed to the best of my ability. I believe in khadi and I always wear it."

When Gandhi was going from Bezwada to Ellore, he was told that a girl of twenty, Satyavati, who had just been widowed wanted to give him all her jewellery valued at Rs. 1,400, and that she wished him to go to her house in a village, a few miles from Peddapadu. So he went. He told the girl that she had no need to discard her ornaments merely because she was widowed. But she was firm and surrendered all her ornaments for khadi work. At Peddapadu, his address was devoted to Satyavati and he told the audience that it was their duty to break down the purdah and to help the

parents of the widow to remarry her if she was at all so inclined. "The story of Satyavati is enacted in hundreds of Hindu homes. The curse of every widow, who is burning within to remarry but dare not for fear of a cruel system, descends upon Hindu society so long as it keeps the widow under an unforgivable bondage."

The Andhra tour was remarkable for its extent and penetration into the interior. The distances to be traversed were long—on the last day, the itinerary covered more than a hundred miles. The cars had to wade through bad roads and the time-table went all wrong. Karamchedu was reached at 11.30 p.m., about four hours late. An eager audience of over five thousand people was waiting for six hours and the meeting was held at midnight.

A crowning episode occurred on April 21. He reached Rentachintla, a village, at midday after motoring seventy-six exhausting miles. A palm-leaf hut had been improvised for him against the wall of a factory, in the midst of a blazing hot plain. In less than a quarter of an hour, a crowd of ten thousand peasants from all parts of Palnad laid seige to it and the palm-leaf screens were reduced to a patch of peep-holes and chinks through which peered a thousand curious eyes. So he shifted himself to the dais under the pandal, in which the meeting was to be held, and taking up his files began writing letters. The vast crowd sat gazing at him, unmindful of the scorching sun. As soon as he finished his work he addressed the meeting and collected coppers for khadi work.

The tour of Andhra had been very exacting. To save time and energy the car, which carried Gandhi, was turned into a moving platform. "To get off cars and push through admiring, shouting crowds, mount platforms sometimes threatening to give way and at times making good the threat, to dismount, push again through more pushing crowds and with difficulty to remount the car and to sink in the seat to be again called upon fifteen minutes after to go through the same ceremony is more than my body would now undertake. I, therefore, suggested to my gaoler that the car should be brought to the centre, and should serve as a platform." It proved practical and he usually addressed meetings sitting on the edge of the back of the car; 319 villages were traversed and thousands of villagers were addressed during the tour.

Mostly Gandhi did his own shaving but this time he discarded the safety razor and returned to an old Bihari razor left by Maganlal

Gandhi. He had not yet mastered the art of using the stone and the strop and, therefore, sent for a khadi-clad barber at an early stage of the tour. To secure a khadi-clad barber was good khadi propaganda. "It gave me an opportunity of preaching the message of Daridranarayan to a class than who one can't imagine better propaganda agents." Addressing the workers, he said: "Let them carry the message of swadeshi to their barbers, washermen and others with whom they come in daily contact. Let us treat them as fellow citizens whose services are as necessary for the advancement of the nation as those of the tallest among us."

On May 21, Gandhi's six weeks' tour of Andhra, the longest and the most intensive that he had yet had in any single province, ended. The subscriptions too, the largest so far collected in any single province save, of course, during 1921, amounted to about Rs. 2,70,000. He insisted upon no deduction being made from cash collected without vouchers being produced and accepted by him. He had noticed before too much laxity about expenses and too much lavishness in ordering things. He further insisted upon the railway expenses of his party being paid by him, so that they might not become a charge upon the purse. He also stressed that all feeding expenses of his party should be paid by him, when they were not paid by the local host. The certified expenses included only motor-car hire, petrol and such other necessary items, just about five per cent of the collections.

Side by side with the tour, Gandhi started a dietetic experiment. He found a fellow crank, Sundaram Gopalrao, founder of a nature cure establishment in Rajahmundry, who believed that to be rid of disease it is necessary to do away with fire in the preparation of foods. Gandhi started taking daily eight *tolas* of germinating wheat, eight *tolas* of sweet almonds reduced to a paste, eight *tolas* of green leaves, chopped or pounded, six sour lemons, and two ounces of honey. Wheat was replaced twice or thrice during a week by an equal quantity of germinating gram. The food was divided into two parts—the first meal was taken at 11 a.m., the second at 6.15 p.m. Only thing touched by fire was water, which he took twice daily, with lemon and honey added to it.

Gandhi had lived for years on fruits and nuts, but never before beyond a fortnight on uncooked cereals and pulses. He attached very great importance to the new experiment. "If it succeeds it

enables serious men and women to make revolutionary changes in their mode of living." The freedom of women from drudgery of cooking "which brings no happiness but which brings disease in its train", was to him an attractive proposition. It was also helpful in tours. "This food surmounts all the difficulty arising from the different food habits of the different provinces."

The dietetic experiment continued without any mishap for four months, but then persistent attack of dysentery kept him in bed. "If I regain my health and have some leisure, I hope to revert to the experiment with better hope in that I shall know what mistakes to avoid," announced Gandhi. But he assured the public that he would not embark upon any experiment that would endanger his other activities.

One important task that Gandhi now set before himself was to strengthen the determination and moral fibre of the people and to this end he devoted ample space in *Young India*. "I spin regularly, but the question is whether or not I should bind myself to it by a vow?" asked a correspondent. Gandhi replied:

"Being accustomed from very childhood to taking vows, I have a strong bias in favour of the practice. It has come to my rescue in many a crisis, I have seen it save others from many a pitfall. A life without vows is like a ship without an anchor or like an edifice built on sand instead of a solid rock. A vow imparts stability, ballast and firmness to one's character. What reliance can be placed on a person who lacks these essential qualities? An agreement is nothing but a mutual interchange of vows; simultaneously one enters into a pledge when one gives one's word to another.

"In old days, the word of mouth of illustrious persons was regarded as good as a bond. They concluded transactions involving millions by oral agreements. In fact our entire social fabric rests on the sanctity of the pledged word. The world would go to pieces if there was not this element of stability, or finality in agreements arrived at. The Himalayas are immovably fixed in their place. India would perish if the firmness of the Himalayas gave way. The sun, the moon and other heavenly bodies move with unerring regularity. Were it not so, human affairs would come to a standstill. But we know that the sun has been rising regularly at its fixed time for countless ages in the past and will continue to do so in future. The cooling orb of the moon will continue always to wax and wane

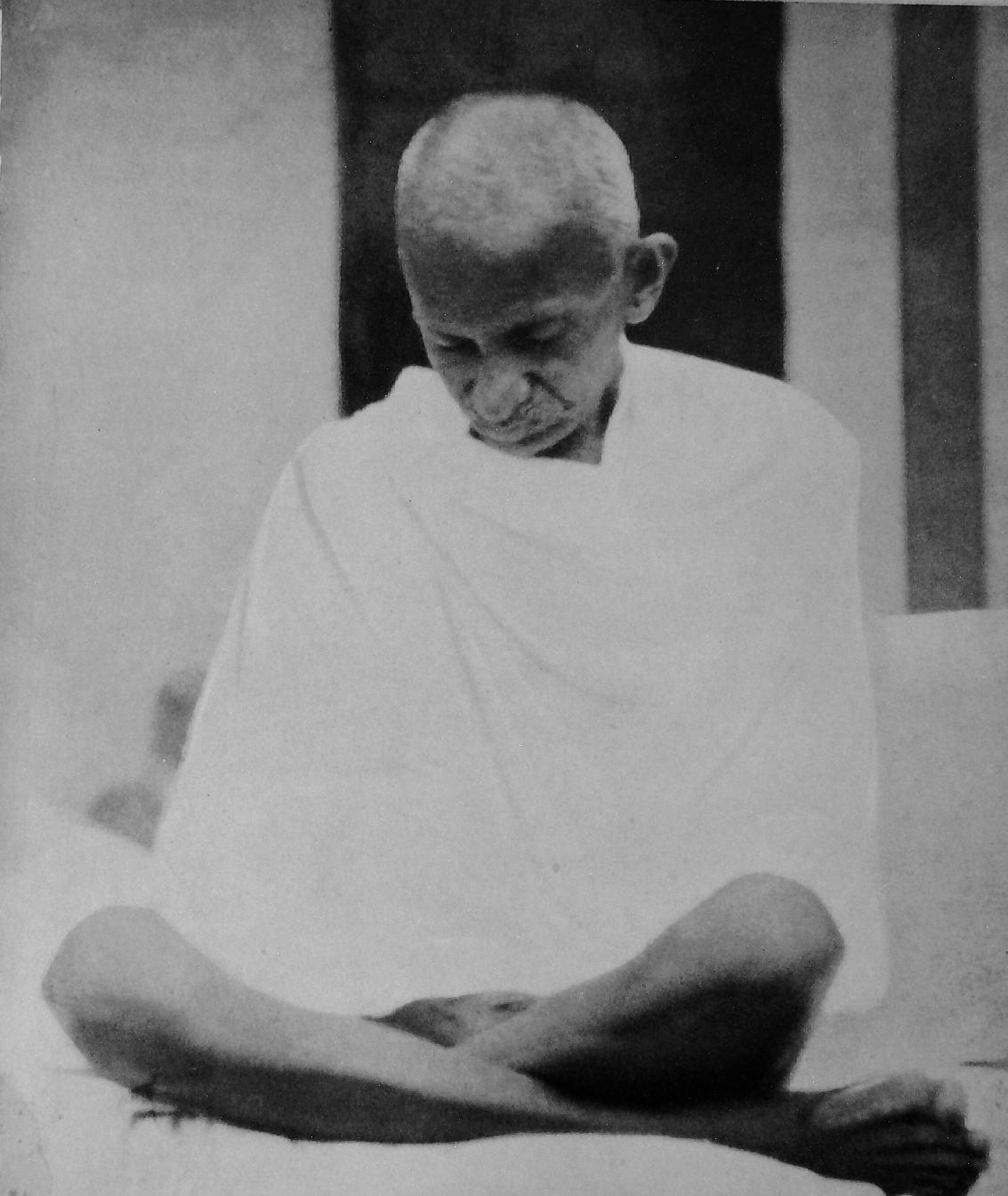
as it has done for ages past with a clock-work regularity. That is why we call the sun and the moon to be witness to our affairs. We base our calendar on their movements, and we regulate our time by their rising and setting.

"The same law, which regulates these heavenly bodies, applies equally to men. A person unbound by vows can never be relied upon. It is overweening pride to say, 'This thing comes natural to me. Why should I bind myself permanently by vows? I can well take care of myself at the critical moment. Why should I take an absolute vow against wine? I never get drunk. Why should I forgo the pleasure of an occasional cup for nothing?' A person who argues like this will never be weaned from his addiction.

"To shirk taking of vows betrays indecision and want of resolution. One never can achieve anything lasting in this world by being irresolute. For instance, what faith can you place in a general or a soldier who lacks resolution and determination, who says, 'I shall keep guard as long as I can'? A householder, whose watchman says that he would keep watch as long as he can, can never sleep in security. No general ever won a victory by following the principle of 'being vigilant so long as he could'.

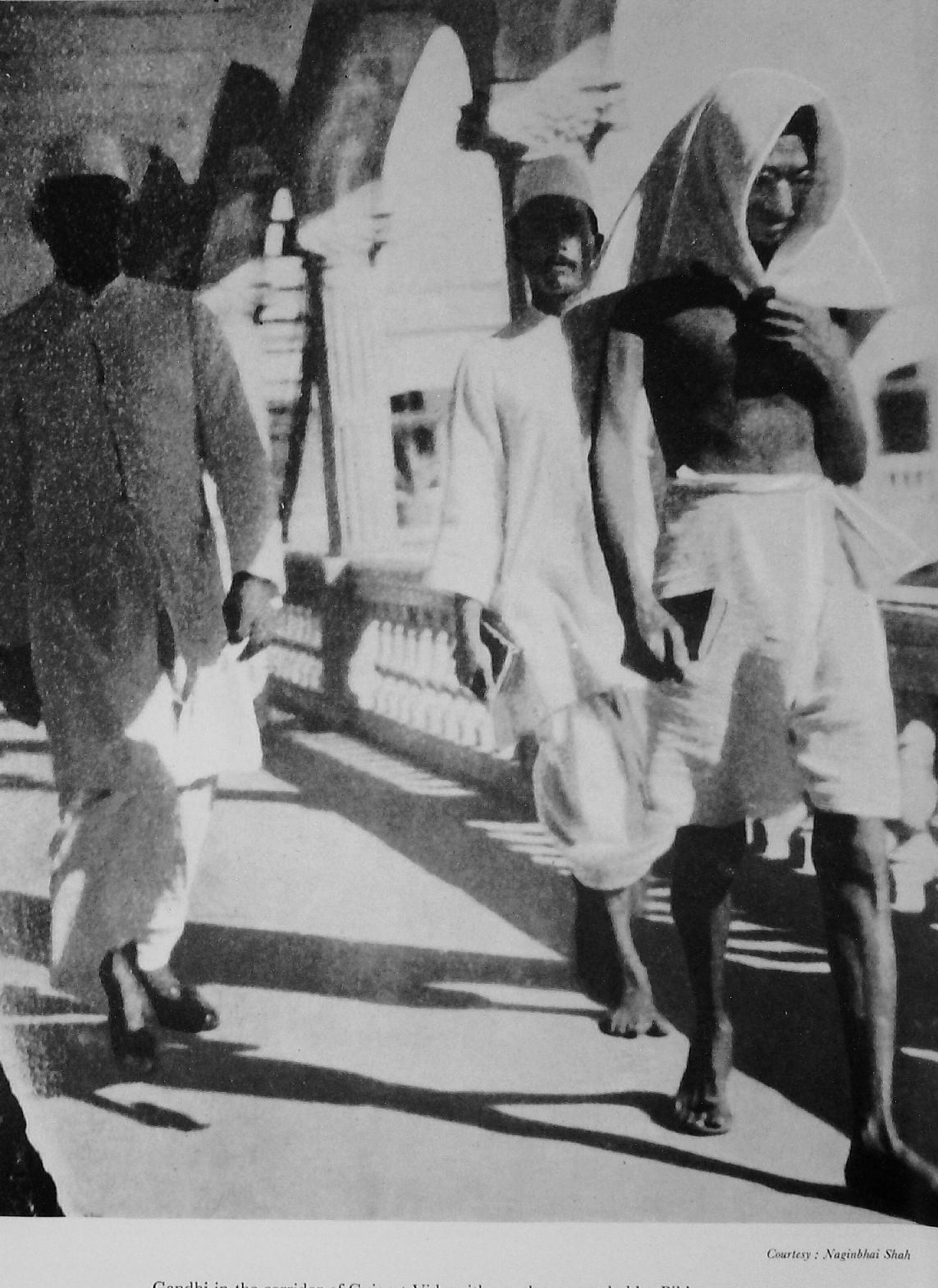
"I have before me innumerable examples of spinners at will. All of them have come to grief sooner or later. On the other hand, sacramental spinning has transformed the life of those who have taken to it; mountains of yarn stored up by them tell the tale. A vow is like a right angle. An insignificant right angle will make all the difference between ugliness and elegance, solidity and shakiness of a gigantic structure. Even so, stability or unstability, purity or otherwise of an entire career may depend upon the taking of a vow.

"It goes without saying that moderation and sobriety are of the very essence of vow-taking. The taking of vows that are not feasible or that are beyond one's capacity would betray thoughtlessness and want of balance. Similarly a vow can be made conditional without losing any of its efficacy or virtue. For instance, there would be nothing wrong about taking a vow to spin for at least one hour a day and to turn out not less than 200 yards daily except when one is travelling or sick. Such a vow would not only be quite in form, but also easy of observance. The essence of a vow does not consist in the difficulty of its performance but in the determination behind it unflinchingly to stick to in the teeth of difficulties.



Photograph : Jagan Mehta

Gandhi at prayers in Sabarmati Ashram, 1929



*Courtesy : Naginbhai Shah*

Gandhi in the corridor of Gujarat Vidyapith, on the way to hold a Bible course, 1929

*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

On the staircase of the Vidyapith

*From Sumati Morarjee Collection*

Gandhi at the foundation-stone ceremony of the Bhagini Seva Mandir, Vile Parle, Bombay, September 7, 1929

"Self-restraint is the keystone of the ethics of vow-taking. For instance, one cannot take a vow of self-indulgence, to eat, drink and be merry, in short, to do as one pleases. This warning is necessary because I know of instances when an attempt was made to cover things of questionable import by means of vows. In the heyday of non-co-operation one even heard the objection raised, 'How can I resign from Government service when I have made a covenant with it to serve it?' Or again, 'How can I close my liquor shop since I have bound myself by contract to run it for five years?' Such questions might appear puzzling sometimes. But on closer thinking it will be seen that a vow can never be used to support or justify an immoral action. A vow must lead one upwards, never downwards towards perdition."

His views on vows led some people to think that he probably supported everything that went under the name of religiosity. A correspondent inquired whether he believed in the possibility of communication from the spirits of the dead. He categorically said: "I have no evidence warranting a disbelief in the possibility of such communications. But I do strongly disapprove of the practice of holding or attempting to hold such communications. They are often deceptive and are products of imagination. The practice is harmful both to the mediums and spirits, assuming the possibility of such communications. It attracts and ties to the earth the spirit so invoked, whereas its effort should be to free itself from the earth, and rise higher. A spirit is not necessarily purer because it is disembodied. It takes with it most of the frailties to which it was liable when on earth. Information or advice, therefore, given by it need not be true or sound. That the spirit likes communications with those on earth is no matter for pleasure. On the contrary it should be weaned from such unlawful attachment."

Another correspondent asked whether Gandhi believed in tree worship. Gandhi saw no harm in this, and defended tree worship because he recognized "that God manifests himself in innumerable forms in this universe."

"It raises the old, old question of image worship," he said. "I am both a supporter and opponent of image worship. When image worship degenerates into idolatry, becomes encrusted with false beliefs and doctrines, it becomes a necessity to combat it as a gross social evil. On the other hand, image worship in the sense

of investing one's ideal with a concrete shape is inherent in man's nature, and even valuable as an aid to devotion . . . Even, so far from seeing anything inherently evil or harmful in tree worship, I find in it a thing instinct with a deep pathos and poetic beauty. It symbolizes true reverence for the entire vegetable kingdom, which with its endless panorama of beautiful shapes and forms, declares to us as it were with a million tongues the greatness and glory of God. Without vegetation our planet would not be able to support life even for a moment. In such a country especially, therefore, in which there is a scarcity of trees, tree worship assumes a profound economic significance. It is true, that the poor, simple-minded women who offer worship to trees have no reasoned understanding of the implications of their act. Possibly they would not be able to give any explanation as to why they perform it. They act in the purity and utter simplicity of their faith. Such faith is not a thing to be despised. It is a great and powerful force that we should treasure."

The social status of women always occupied his attention. The assembly passed in August the final reading of Sarda's Child Marriage Restraint Bill, the object of which was to discourage the solemnization of marriages between boys of under eighteen or girls of under fourteen years. The Hindu orthodoxy bitterly opposed it. Mahomed Ali led a campaign against the bill and approached the Viceroy seeking to exempt the Muslims from it. Gandhi supported the bill and stood for complete equality of women with men. He wrote in *Young India* dated October 17:

"I do not need to be a girl to be wild over man's atrocities towards woman. I count the law of inheritance among the least in the list. The Sarda Bill deals with an evil far greater than the one which the law of inheritance connotes. But I am uncompromising in the matter of women's rights. In my opinion, she should labour under no legal disability not suffered by man. I should treat daughters and sons on a footing of perfect equality. As women begin to realize their strength, as they must, in proportion to the education they receive, they will naturally resent the glaring inequalities to which they are subjected.

"But to remove legal inequalities will be a mere palliative. The root of the evil lies much deeper than most people realize. It lies in man's greed of power and fame and deeper still in mutual lust.

Man has always desired power. Ownership of property gives this power. Man hankers also after posthumous fame based on power. This cannot be had, if property is progressively cut up in pieces as it must be if all the posterity become equal co-sharers. Hence the descent of property for the most part on the eldest male issue. Most women are married. And they are co-sharers, in spite of the law being against them, in their husbands' power and privileges. They delight in being ladies this and what not simply for the fact of being the wives of particular lords. Though, therefore, they may vote for radical reform in academic discussions over inequalities, when it comes to acting up to their vote, they will be found to be unwilling to part with the privileges.

"Whilst, therefore, I would always advocate the repeal of all legal disqualifications, I should have the enlightened women of India to deal with the root cause. Woman is the embodiment of sacrifice and suffering; her advent to public life should, therefore, result in purifying it, in restraining unbridled ambition and accumulation of property. Let them know that millions of men have no property to transmit to posterity. Let us learn from them that it is better for the few to have no ancestral property at all. The real property that a parent can transmit to all equally is his or her character and educational facilities. Parents should seek to make their children self-reliant, well able to earn an honest livelihood by the sweat of the brow. The upbringing of minor children will then naturally devolve upon the major descendants. Much of the present imbecility of the children of the rich will go, if the latter could but substitute the worthy ambition of educating their children to become independent for the unworthy ambition of making them slaves of ancestral property, which kills enterprise and feeds passions which accompany idleness and luxury. The privilege of the awakened women should be to spot and eradicate agelong evils.

"That mutual lust too has played an important part in bringing about the disqualifications of the fair sex hardly needs any demonstration. Woman has circumvented man in a variety of ways in her unconsciously subtle ways, as man has vainly and equally consciously struggled to thwart woman in gaining ascendancy over him. The result is a stalemate. . . They may not ape the manner of the West which may be suited to its environment. They must apply methods suited to the Indian genius and the Indian environment.

Theirs must be the strong controlling, purifying, steadying hand, conserving what is best in our culture and unhesitatingly rejecting what is base and degrading. This is the work of Sitas, Draupadis, Savitris and Damayantis, not of amazons and prudes."

He suggested a remedy to women against the excessive subordination of the wife to the husband. In case of cruelty he even advocated separation in a Hindu society in which custom had discountenanced divorce for ages: "When public opinion in any social group requires that particular form of relief, I have no doubt it will be forthcoming." But mere isolation of the victim from the one of tyranny is not enough. "She should be induced to qualify herself for public service."

He stood for all-round reform in which the young men should resist premature marriage, and at all cost resist all expenditure. "Indeed not more than ten rupees should be required for the performance of the religious ceremonial, and nothing beyond the ceremonial should be considered a necessary part of marriage rites. In this age of democracy, when the distinction between the rich and the poor, the high and the low, is sought to be abolished, it is for the rich to lead the poor to a contented life by exercising self-restraint in their enjoyments and indulgences. Thousands of poor people deprive themselves for this purpose of necessaries of life, and burden themselves with debts carrying ruinous rates of interest."

A struggle was imminent and he advocated self-sacrifice as the essential requisite for the attainment of freedom. On his birthday, he made public trust of the Navajivan Karyalaya, property worth one lakh of rupees, in November 1929. Henceforth all activities of the institution were to be conducted on self-supporting basis, with the object of preaching non-violence for the attainment of swaraj, propaganda for khadi and swadeshi in all walks of life, removal of untouchability and communal unity.

"Whatever the leaders of society do, the others will follow," said Gandhi.

## *Purna Swaraj*

1929

IN VIEW of the campaign of repression all over the country, the A.-I.C.C. met in Bombay on May 24, 1929, to consider Gandhi's plan for resistance. The substance of his resolution was, that before the end of August next there should be on the Congress register at least seven and a half lakh of men and women. "If it is honestly worked, we should have, as in 1921, an actively working organization. The test of a perfect Congress organization is simple: the Congress must be represented in every village and every member must know what the Congress means and must respond to the demands made upon him by the Congress."

On June 11 Gandhi left Sabarmati ashram for Almora. This tour had been devised by Jawaharlal Nehru for both rest and work and as a forerunner of the U.P. tour. He gave the message of khadi and Hindu-Muslim unity, at Bareilly: "In spite of the lowering cloud of disunity that has darkened the horizon of the country for the time being, I am here to proclaim my faith in the establishment of Hindu-Muslim unity, because people have come to realize that swaraj is a vital need for the country, and the unity between all sections of its population is a *sine qua non* of swaraj."

On June 14 he reached Nainital. It was here that he came in direct contact with the people of the hills. Their poverty and timidity touched him. The gospel of self-help and self-respect formed the kernel of his message to these downtrodden people. At a public meeting held at Bhowali, he referred to the grievances enumerated in the citizens' address and advised the people to set out to work out their own salvation. They had expressed the hope in their address that his visit would make an end of their woes. But he could not arrogate to himself that power which was God's alone, and God helped only those who helped themselves. If they became united and organized and realized the strength that was

theirs, no power on earth could keep them out of their rights for any length of time. It was just to develop this internal strength that the A.-I.C.C. had laid down the Congress programme.

He reached Tadikhet on June 16 to celebrate the anniversary of Prem Vidyalaya, a child of the non-co-operation movement of 1921. His presence attracted large crowds from the surrounding villages. He gave in a nutshell his message to the people of the hills. "I heard the tale of your woes," he began, "even before I came here, but the remedy lies in your own hands. Its name is self-purification. We are today weighed down by our selfishness and parochialism of outlook, we must cast it out. We know how to die for our family but it is time that we learnt to go a step further. We must widen the circle of our love till it embraces the whole village, the village in its turn must take into its fold the district, the province and so on, till the scope of our love becomes co-terminous with the world. Our Congress committees are in a moribund condition. It should be up to you to rally round the banner of the Congress in your numbers and once more make it pulsate and throb with life. You must cultivate self-confidence and make God your shield. There is none mightier than He. A man who throws himself on God ceases to fear man."

Addressing the workers of Prem Vidyalaya he said: "I hold that no institution that is worth its salt can be starved for want of funds. More institutions are smothered by opulence than are killed by poverty. Constant dependence on the public for funds teaches an institution the lesson of true humility and keeps it on the alert. On the contrary, an institution that is altogether independent of the public for its support is liable to succumb to inertia and become lax in the performance of its duties. The amount of public support that an institution can command affords a true measure of its utility. I would advise every institution that is faced with financial distress to curtail its activities so as to bring it within the compass of its means rather than to keep up appearances by borrowing funds. In the former case the institution, though reduced in size, will still retain its pristine health, in the latter case its bloated size will only be a size of its diseased condition. I would, therefore, earnestly beseech you to keep clear of this fatal error.

"I am glad to find that your institution has dedicated itself to khadi work and has given to the spinning wheel a central position to

understand the inner significance of this little wheel and to realize the full potency with which it is charged. There is no mightier agent for bringing together and tying in an indissoluble bond the teeming millions of India from Peshawar to Cape Comorin and from Karachi to distant Assam than the frail thread that is spun on this wheel. I would, therefore, suggest to you that you should not measure its worth in terms of rupees, annas and pies, but in terms of the strength that it can generate among the people."

The programme at Almora commenced with an address by the municipal board. During the period of six years that it had been under popular control, the board had set up a brilliant record of educational and social work. Replying to this part of the address, Gandhi suggested that the board should try to make education self-supporting by introducing a course of spinning and weaving in its curriculum of studies. In a vast country like India, the task of making primary education universal was an impossibility even with the expenditure of crores of rupees unless such a plan as he suggested was universally adopted. The introduction of manual training would not only go a long way towards enabling primary education to pay its way but have a salutary effect on the physical health of the children and curb their mischievous tendency by the discipline that it provided.

While Gandhi was returning from this meeting, a villager by name Padamsingh was knocked down by his car. When Gandhi went to see him in the hospital, Padamsingh said, "I want you to give blessings to my son if I pass away." "I undertake to take him to the ashram where he would be trained up and taken care of or make the necessary provision for him in his home, as you choose," said Gandhi. The dying man said: "No, that is not what I want, it is needless. All I want is your blessings."

"Death or lesser accidents generally do not give me more than a momentary shock, but even at the time of writing this, I have not recovered from the shock," observed Gandhi in *Young India*, referring to the death of Padamsingh. "I should have either insisted on walking or the car proceeding only at a walking pace till we had been clear of the crowd. But constant motor riding had evidently coarsened me, and freedom from serious accidents produced an unconscious but unforgivable indifference to the safety of pedestrians. Although I may be twitted about my inconsistency,

I must repeat my belief that motoring in spite of all its advantages is an unnatural form of locomotion. It, therefore, behoves those who use it to restrain their drivers and to realize that speed is not the *summum bonum* of life and may even be no gain in the long run. I have never been clear in my mind that my mad rush through India has been all to the good. Anyway Padamsingh's death has set me thinking furiously."

Gandhi's visit to Almora ended on July 2. On his return to the Sabarmati ashram on the 6th, he read in the press his name being proposed for the Congress presidentship. He declined the offer and proposed Jawaharlal Nehru's name:

"I feel that I have become almost unfit for attending to the details of office work which I must do, as is my nature, if I accepted the office. I know too that I am not keeping pace with the march of events. There is, therefore, a hiatus between the rising generation and me. Not that I believe myself to be a back number. But when it comes to working in their midst, I know that I must take a back seat and allow the surging wave to pass over me.

"Older men have had their innings. The battle of the future has to be fought by younger men and women. And it is but meet that they are led by one of themselves. Older men should yield with grace what will be taken from them by force, if they do not read the signs of the times. Responsibility will mellow and sober the youth, and prepare them for the burden they must discharge. Pandit Jawaharlal has everything to recommend him. He has for years discharged with singular ability and devotion the office of secretary of the Congress. By his bravery, determination, application, integrity and grit he has captivated the imagination of the youth of the land. He has come in touch with labour and the peasantry. His close acquaintance with the European politics is a great asset in enabling him to assess ours.

"But say the older heads: 'When we are likely to have to enter into delicate negotiations with various groups and parties outside the Congress, when we might have to deal with British diplomacy, when we have yet the Hindu-Muslim knot to undo, we must have some one like you as the head.' In so far as there is force in this argument, it is sufficiently answered by my drawing attention to the fact that whatever special qualities I may possess in the direction indicated, I shall be able to exercise more effectively by remaining

detached from and untrammelled by, than by holding office. So long as I retain the affection and confidence of our people, there is not the slightest danger of my not being able without holding office to make the fullest use of such powers as I may possess. God has enabled me to affect the life of the country since 1920 without the necessity of office. I am not aware that my capacity for service was a whit enhanced by my becoming president of the Congress at Belgaum.

"Those who know the relations that subsist between Jawaharlal and me know that his being in the chair is as good as my being in it. We may have intellectual differences but our hearts are one. And with all his youthful impetuosities, his sense of stern discipline and loyalty make him an inestimable comrade in whom one can put the most implicit faith.

"'Will not Jawaharlal's name be a red rag to the English bull?' whispers another critic. We give English statesmen little credit for common sense and diplomatic skill and betray less faith in ourselves when we think like the imaginary critic. If a decision is really right for us, it ought to be right for the whole world. Lastly, a president of the Congress is not an autocrat. He is a representative working under a well-defined constitution and well-known traditions. He can no more impose his views on the people than the English King. The Congress is a forty-five-year old organization and has a status above its most distinguished presidents. It is the Congress as a whole with which, when the time is ripe, British statesmen will have to deal. They know this probably far better than we do. All things considered, therefore, my advice to those concerned is to cease to think of me and to call Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to the high office with the fullest confidence and hope."

Gandhi's refusal, though emphatic, seemed to leave some room for argument. It was hoped that he would reconsider it. He was nominated by ten provincial Congress committees while Vallabhbhai Patel and Jawaharlal were backed by three committees each. A meeting of the A.-I.C.C. was held at Lucknow in September to decide finally, but Gandhi pressed Jawaharlal's name for the presidentship, which was accepted. In hailing the young president, Gandhi wrote:

"Some fear in this transference of power from the old to the young the doom of the Congress. I do not. The doom was to be

feared from the sceptre being held by paralytic hands as mine are at present. I may take the reader into the secret that before recommending Jawaharlal's name for the burden I had ascertained from him whether he felt himself strong enough to bear the weight. 'If it is thrust upon me, I hope I shall not wince,' was the characteristic reply. In bravery he is not to be surpassed. Who can excel him in the love of the country? 'He is rash and impetuous,' say some. This quality is an additional qualification at the present moment. And if he has the dash and the rashness of a warrior, he has also the prudence of a statesman. A lover of discipline, he has shown himself to be capable of rigidly submitting to it even where it has seemed irksome. He is undoubtedly an extremist thinking far ahead of his surroundings. But he is humble and practical enough not to force the pace to the breaking point. He is pure as crystal, he is truthful beyond suspicion. He is a knight *sans peur, sans reproche*. The nation is safe in his hands.

"But the youth are on their trial. This has been a year for the youth's awakening. Theirs undoubtedly was the largest contribution to the brilliant success of the Simon Commission boycott. They may take the election of Jawaharlal Nehru as a tribute to their service. But the youth may not rest on their laurels. They have to march many more stages before the nation comes to its own. Steam becomes a mighty power only when it allows itself to be imprisoned in a strong little reservoir and produces tremendous motion and carries huge weights by permitting itself a tiny and measured outlet. Even so have the youth of the country of their own free will to allow their inexhaustible energy to be imprisoned, controlled and set free in strictly measured and required quantities. This appointment of Jawaharlal Nehru as the captain is proof of the trust the nation reposes in its youth. Jawaharlal alone can do little. The youth of the country must be his arms and his eyes. Let them prove worthy of the trust."

Gandhi gave definite suggestions as to how the youth must prepare themselves for real national work:

"Students should devote the whole of their vacation to village service. To this end, instead of taking their walks along beaten paths, they should walk to the villages within easy reach of their institutions, study the condition of the village folk, and befriend them. This habit will bring them in contact with the villagers who, when

the students actually go to stay in their midst, will by reason of the previous occasional contact receive them as friends rather than as strangers to be looked upon with suspicion. During the vacation the students will stay in the villages, offer to conduct classes for adults, teach the rules of sanitation to the villagers and attend to the ordinary cases of illness. They will also introduce the spinning wheel amongst them and teach them the use of every spare minute. In order that this may be done, students and teachers will have to revise their ideas of the uses of vacation. Often do thoughtless teachers prescribe lessons to be done during the vacation. This is a vicious habit. Vacation is just the period when students' minds should be free from the routine work and be left free for self-help and original development. The village work I have mentioned is easily the best form of recreation and light instruction. It is obviously the best preparation for dedication to exclusive village service after finishing the studies."

On the political front the main obstacle to the nation's advance was the disunity between Hindus and Muslims. Jinnah and the Ali brothers drifted away from the Congress and they merged themselves with the communalists. "Muslims should have nothing to do with the Congress as long as the present Hindu mentality prevails," declared Shaukat Ali. To promote among Muslims the spirit of nationalism and to counteract narrow communalism, Maulana Azad called a conference of a new party, the Nationalist Muslim Party, at Allahabad in July. A fortnight later, Mrs. Naidu arranged a meeting between Gandhi, Jinnah and the Ali brothers in Bombay, to bridge the differences. The conversation was not made public but Gandhi stated: "They were friendly conversations and need have no importance attached to them. But naturally I want to explore all possible avenues to peace and never lose a single opportunity of knowing the mind of those who have any influence in India. It is best for the public not to speculate about the contents or the results of these conversations. If anything comes out of them, they will certainly know."

Gandhi mainly devoted his time to the furtherance of khadi work. The All-India Spinners' Association announced a prize of one lakh of rupees to a winner who would hand over to it on or before October 30, 1930 a spinning wheel fulfilling certain conditions: it should produce 16,000 yards of yarn of twelve to

twenty counts in eight hours; the price must not exceed Rs.150 and the wheel must be made handy and substantial and of such construction that the worn-out parts can easily be replaced. "I hope that the prize will produce a spinning Singer who would raise the income of the village spinner eightfold," commented Gandhi.

"The fateful 1st of January 1930 is approaching fast, but you are still harping on your formula of 'khadi, khadi and again khadi', and refuse to give any effective lead to the country" said several critics. "Why not give a mandate to youthful leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Bose to raise a force of one crore national volunteers who would be ready to lay down their lives for the sake of the country?"

Gandhi promptly replied:

"That even if khadi gets on one's nerves, I have no other remedy to suggest, in its place. I cannot conceive of swaraj without khadi.

"Nor is it true to say that the country is utterly fed up with khadi and that khadi has begun to get on the people's nerves. It may be so in the case of a handful of town dwellers of India, but they do not constitute India. The foundation of India's nationality is to be laid not in her towns but in her villages, and the only movement that is at present actively going on among India's villages is that of khadi. It is daily expanding. It today provides a living to at least 2,000 middle-class young men, and enables over one lakh of poor women spinners to eke out a living. Similarly it is giving employment to over ten thousand weavers, and a host of washermen, dyers, carders, tailors, etc. If in spite of all these beneficent results that khadi has produced and is producing, it is as gall and wormwood to any, I can only pity them.

"It is a gratuitous insult to Jawaharlal Nehru or Subhas Bose to say that they are awaiting my permission or mandate to organize the youth of the country, and are being kept back for want of it. They are already doing the work of organization to the best of their power and ability. They need no permission from me for doing their part. If they are true soldiers, as I believe they are, I could not hold them back if I would. But the plain, painful fact of the matter is, that not to talk of one crore volunteers there are not ten thousand who are prepared completely to sacrifice themselves for duty's sake. I know that they can get ready in no time if they wish, but 'the will to do' is lacking. You cannot get swaraj

by mere speeches, shows, processions, etc. What is needed is solid, steady, constructive work, what the youth craves for and is fed on is only the former.

"It is a gross misrepresentation of the true situation to say that the masses are impatient to be led to civil disobedience, but that I am hanging back. I know well enough how to lead to civil disobedience a people who are prepared to embark upon it on my terms. I see no such sign on the horizon. But I live in faith. I am still hoping, that a way out of the 'encircling gloom' will be found on the 1st January next."

Gandhi's U.P. tour commenced at Agra on September 11. His health was still delicate and he was compelled to take rest in Agra for one week. The next three days, he spent in the Bhopal state on an invitation from its ruler. There was not much of a public programme in Bhopal but an exchange of views took place between the ruler and Gandhi on the subject of agriculture and cottage industries. Jamnalal Bajaj with his khadi portfolio joined him from Bombay. Dr. Zakir Husain, principal of the Jamia Millia, came to discuss the affairs of his institution. There was a public function, the first of its kind in the state, when under the chairmanship of the Finance Minister, a purse of Rs.1,035, collected by the citizens, was presented to him. In the meeting he reiterated his belief that the existence of the rule of the Indian princes was not inconsistent with the evolution of democracy. He was, therefore, no enemy of Indian states, and he entertained every hope of their reaching his ideal of democratic swaraj which he often interpreted as Ram Raj. Using the word Ram Raj in a Muslim state and for an audience which had a large number of Muslims in it, Gandhi immediately added: "I warn my Muslim friends against misunderstanding me in my use of the word Ram Raj. By Ram Raj, I do not mean Hindu raj. I mean by Ram Raj, Divine Raj, the Kingdom of God. For me, Rama and Rahim are one and the same deity. I acknowledge no other God but the one God of truth and righteousness. Whether Rama of my imagination ever lived or not on this earth, the ancient ideal of Ram Raj is undoubtedly one of true democracy in which the meanest citizen could be sure of prompt justice without an elaborate and costly procedure. Even the dog is described by the poet to have received justice under Ram Raj."

On September 10, after seeing the relics of Sanchi, Gandhi left for Agra. The next day he addressed a public meeting at which a purse of Rs. 8,000 was presented to him. "I am here to re-declare my faith in the potency of non-co-operation," he solemnly said. "You have all got to prepare for January 1930 from now. The A.-I.C.C. has laid down the conditions by fulfilling which alone, in its opinion, swaraj by non-violent means can be attained. It is the triple constructive programme, namely, the boycott of foreign cloth through khadi, the suppression of the drink and drug evil and the elimination of untouchability by the Hindus. And since all this work can be effectively done through a proper Congress organization, the reorganization of the Congress by the enrolment of the Congress members is a necessity. Let me now warn you solemnly that if we do nothing, swaraj or independence is not going to drop down from heaven by a mere declaration by the Congress in December. I will go further and say, that unless in the meantime we shall have forged an effective sanction to back our declaration which we want to make, if the Government should refuse to accept by the midnight of December 31, 1929, the national demand, our declaration will remain a dead letter and we shall be unable to do anything effective during 1930."

An important function was a meeting with the students of the Agra College and the St. John's College held jointly to minimize the strain on him. It had been brought to his notice that the evil of early marriages was prevalent among the students of U.P. to a much greater degree than in any other province. He, therefore, before beginning his address, asked such students as were already married to raise their hands, only to find that the statement made with regard to them was but too true. A similar query about the number of khadi-wearers elicited the fact that hardly a dozen from that vast audience wore khadi. These two incidents gave him his cue. The students of one of the colleges had said that although they believed in the ideals for which he stood, they were sorry to confess that they were unable to put those ideals into practice. They contented themselves with offering him only their hearts. "I am not prepared," he remarked, "to hear this confession of incapacity from students. All your scholarship, all your study of Shakespeare and Wordsworth would be vain if at the same time you do not build your character and attain mastery over your

thoughts and actions. When you have attained self-mastery and learn to control your passions you will not utter notes of despair. You cannot give your hearts and profess poverty of action. To give one's heart is to give all. You must, to start with, have hearts to give. And this you can do if you will cultivate them."

The rest of the programme consisted of a couple of short visits to the villages near by. The comparative rest gave him an opportunity he had longed for to visit some of the historical sites in and about Agra. He visited Fatehpur Sikri, where the Ibadat Khana or the Hall of Cosmopolitan Worship, built by Akbar, made a deep impression on him. The masterpieces of Mogul architecture such as the Taj Mahal impressed him, but he could not forget the forced labour behind the magnificent structures.

His brief convalescence in Agra ended on September 19. The Mainpuri district, which was the first to be traversed, was comparatively a small district with a population of about eight lakhs. In order to lessen the strain, all the addresses were presented to him at one public meeting and were mostly taken as read. The district Congress committee's address proudly referred to the long tradition of political awakening in Mainpuri which dated right from the 1857 rebellion. It also mentioned that they had already enrolled 2,400 Congress members as against the prescribed quota of 1,800. He expressed satisfaction with what had been done but warned them that their enrolment of Congress members would not much advance them on the road to swaraj, if they were no better than sleeping partners in a concern. If they wanted to do something effective in 1930, the members enrolled must be roused to a sense of their responsibility.

He spent many weeks in the districts of U.P. As he motored through the rural areas, the crowds ranging from 10,000 to 25,000 gathered every few miles to see and listen to him. The principal meeting of the day exceeded 100,000 in the eastern districts like Gorakhpur. He addressed the vast multitude briefly, avoiding all undue strain.

The youth were full of enthusiasm but had not yet the capacity for sustained action. "We profess the utmost admiration for the noble ideals embodied in your life, but we do not even try to follow them," lamented the principal of the Christ Church College of Cawnpore at a students' meeting. Gandhi replied:

"You ask me as to what I would have you to do in 1930. Well, I would expect you, in 1930, smiling to face death if need be. But it must not be the death of a felon. God accepts the sacrifice of the pure in heart. You, therefore, must purify yourselves before you can become fit instruments for the service of the country even unto death."

Addressing the students of the Hindu University, he said: "If you will express the requisite purity of character in action, you cannot do it better than through the spinning wheel. Of all the myriads of God, Daridranarayan is the most sacred inasmuch as it represents the untold millions of poor people as distinguished from the few rich people. The easiest and the best way of identifying yourselves somewhat with these starving millions is to spread the message of the spinning wheel in the threefold manner suggested by me. You can spread it by becoming expert spinners, by wearing khadi and by pecuniary contributions. Remember that the millions will never have access to the facilities that Malaviyaji has provided for you. What return will you make to these your brothers and sisters? You may be sure, that when he conceived the plan of this university, he had the question in mind and he embarked on the mission in the hope that you would so conduct yourselves as to deserve the training given you."

On the same day, Gandhi delivered a convocation address at the Kashi Vidyapith conducted by Acharya Narendra Deva. When Gandhi entered the pandal for the ceremonial function he had to wear the yellow robe of the *kulapati*. The oath administered to the students was in Sanskrit and so was the exhortation. This solemn ceremony being over, he delivered his address in simple Hindustani:

"I know that your fewness worries you often, and some of you doubt the wisdom of having given up your old institutions and secretly cherish a desire to return to them. I suggest to you that in every great cause it is not the number of fighters that counts but it is the quality of which they are made that becomes the deciding factor. The greatest men of the world have always stood alone. The great prophets, Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus, Mahomed—they all stood alone like many others whom I can name. But they had living faith in themselves and their God, and believing as they did that God was on their side, they never felt lonely. You may

*Photograph : Krishnalal Bhatt*

Gandhi during his morning walk in the fields, Sabarmati, 1929

*Courtesy : P. N. Verma*

Gandhi at work in Kalakankar State Guest House, November 1929

recall the occasion when pursued by a numerous enemy Abu Bakr, who was accompanying the Prophet in his flight, trembled to think of their fate and said, 'Look at the number of the enemies that is overtaking us. What shall we two do against these heavy odds?' Without a moment's reflection the Prophet rebuked his faithful companion by saying, 'No, Abu Bakr, we are three, for God is with us.' Or take the invincible faith of Bibhishan and Prahlad. I want you to have that same living faith in yourselves and God."

The U.P. tour included almost every place of importance in the province. Meerut, where the labour leaders were being tried, had an extra attraction for Gandhi. Though, as he remarked, he was neither a communist nor any other "ist", he could not miss seeing the prisoners if he was permitted. One afternoon, he visited the prisoners unexpectedly. He told the Meerut accused that if they were not free men before the end of the year he expected to join them early next year. In visiting them he wanted to show in a practical manner that their prosecution was wrong and that it was atrocious that they should be tried in an inconvenient and far-off place like Meerut.

At the request of the Vice-chancellor of the Muslim University he visited Aligarh. His speech was an impassioned appeal to the youth to produce servants of the country and Islam like Gokhale. He recalled to the students the simplicity of the second Caliph Umar, told them how he, although the treasures of the world lay at his feet, denied himself every form of ease and luxury, and rebuked his lieutenants when they pampered themselves by using soft silk garments instead of coarse khadi and fine flour instead of unsifted stone-ground coarse flour. Khadi was practically conspicuous by its absence among the students. Gandhi, therefore, made an appeal to them to adopt khadi and thus establish a living bond between themselves and the millions of India's paupers whose children could never have an access to the facilities for education which the foresight and genius of Sir Syed Ahmed had provided for them. And lastly, he asked them to consider themselves custodians of India's honour and makers of Hindu-Muslim unity.

From Aligarh, taking several places on the way, he proceeded to Mathura. The absence in this celebrated place of pilgrimage of anything to remind one of the nativity of Krishna, the first among the cowherds of the world, as Gandhi called him at a meeting,

preyed upon his mind, and in reply to the addresses he dwelt up—on the subject of cow protection. A visitor to Mathura and the surrounding places, reported to be the birthplace and the playground of the divine keeper of the cow, had a right to expect this part of the country to show the finest cattle in the world and to produce rich and unadulterated milk, almost at the price of water even as it was said to have been in Krishna's age. A visitor would expect the people of Mathura to show the rigorous piety, simplicity and bravery of Krishna. He would also expect to find the despised untouchables to be treated with affection and every consideration. He added: "As I go through the streets of Mathura, I see cattle with their bones protruding, cows who give so little milk as to be an economic burden. I see in this holy place a slaughter-house where the cow whom Krishna protected and venerated is slaughtered for food. Do not imagine that it is the Muslim or even the Englishman who is in the first instance responsible for this shameful state of things. We Hindus are primarily responsible for it. Cattle will be killed as they are fast becoming an economic burden on the land, and if they are not killed in India they will be shipped as they are already being shipped to Australia for its butcheries. Hindus are in the first instance possessors of the vast majority of India's cattle. It is they who sell them to butchers or their buyers. If we would but do our duty towards the divine child whom we affect to worship, we would study the science of cattle-keeping and would make it a point of ensuring that they are superior to any cattle in the world in their capacity to give milk and bear burdens. If we would do this we have to discard foolish prejudices and superstitions, however ancient they may be."

The plight of the cow that he witnessed in Govardhan grieved him more even than in Mathura. "You have brought me to a place which stirs me to my depths," he said. "I belong to a Vaishnava family. From my childhood I have been taught to think of the birthplace and the playground of Krishna as places which would make a man discard his sins if he visited them. I had no such feeling as I passed through the streets. This is the place where Krishna is alleged to have lifted with his little finger the hill of Govardhan and protected his cowherd companions and their cattle from being deluged by the rains that were pouring upon them. The spirit of that service of humanity and its companion, the cow, I miss here.

Instead I see dilapidated cattle and I see before me men and boys without life or lustre and I am told and I find Brahmins described as beggars. Not so were those, the Brahmins of old. They were those who had seen God face to face and imparted to all men the secret of so seeing God. It was not on charity that they lived. Their maintenance was found for them as a matter of privilege by those whom they endowed with divine knowledge. They were in the days of Krishna the custodians of true religion. They arrogated no superiority to themselves but commanded respect and veneration by reason of their service of humanity. I see no trace of this in sacred Govardhan."

Of the several problems that agitated his mind, the relation between the zamindars and the ryots in U.P. found a place for a special article in *Young India*:

"The fact is that whatever may be done is no more than a belated return to the ryots of their due. The hideous caricature of Varnashram is responsible for the air of superiority that the so-called Kshatriya assumes and the status of inherited inferiority the poor ryot submissively recognizes as his deserved lot in life. If Indian society is to make real progress along peaceful lines, there must be a definite recognition on the part of the moneyed class that the ryot possesses the same soul that they do and that their wealth gives them no superiority over the poor. They must regard themselves, even as the Japanese nobles did, as trustees holding their wealth for the good of their wards, the ryots. Then they would take no more than a reasonable amount as commission for their labours.

"At present there is no proportion between the wholly unnecessary pomp and extravagance of the moneyed class and the squalid surroundings and the grinding pauperism of the ryots in whose midst the former are living. A model zamindar would, therefore, at once reduce much of the burden the ryot is now bearing, he would come in intimate touch with the ryots and know their wants and inject hope into them in the place of despair which is killing the very life out of them. He will not be satisfied with the ryots' ignorance of the laws of sanitation and hygiene. He will reduce himself to poverty in order that the ryot may have the necessaries of life. He will study the economic condition of the ryots under his care, establish schools in which he will educate his own children side by side with those of the ryots. He will purify the village well and the

village tank. He will teach the ryot to sweep his roads and clean his latrines by himself doing this necessary labour. He will throw open without reserve his own gardens for the unrestricted use of the ryot. He will use as hospital, school, or the like, most of the unnecessary buildings which he keeps for his pleasure. If only the capitalist class will read the signs of the times, revise their notions of god-given right to all they possess, in an incredibly short space of time the seven hundred thousand dungheaps which today pass muster as villages can be turned into abodes of peace, health and comfort. I am convinced that the capitalist, if he follows the Samurai of Japan, has nothing really to lose and everything to gain. There is no other choice than between voluntary surrender on the part of the capitalist of superfluities and consequent acquisition of the real happiness of all on the one hand, and on the other the impending chaos into which, if the capitalist does not wake up betimes, awakened but ignorant, famishing millions will plunge the country and which not even the armed force that a powerful government can bring into play can avert."

On November 24, the U.P. tour came to an end. During the crowded five weeks, Gandhi addressed thousands of people and collected Rs. 3,30,000 for the khadi fund. When he was asked to give a message to the province, he remarked: "I want it to be like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru."

The Lahore Congress drew near. Events were moving fast. British Government took a forward step, and the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, immediately after his return from England in October, made an announcement about a round table conference, consisting of the British and Indian statesmen, with a view to seeking agreement for the proposals to be submitted to Parliament. In the statement made by Lord Irwin on October 31, he said: "In view of the doubts which have been expressed both in Britain and India regarding the interpretation to be placed on the intentions of the British Government in enacting the statute of 1919, I am authorized on behalf of His Majesty's Government to state clearly that, in their judgement, it is implicit in the declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress as there contemplated is the attainment of dominion status." Lord Irwin used for the first time in a binding official utterance the magic word "dominion". The promise was undated and undefined but it made, none the less, its

impression on the Indian leaders, for with it went at last the offer of a round table conference, as between the leaders of two equal nations, which Indians had long demanded in vain.

Hardly had this Viceregal announcement been made when a Leaders' Conference was called at President Patel's residence in Delhi. The conference met for over three hours and it considered Gandhi's draft with modifications incorporating certain suggestions made by Sapru. The agreed statement read thus: "We appreciate the sincerity underlying the declarations, as also the desire of the British Government to placate Indian opinion. We hope to be able to tender our co-operation to His Majesty's Government in their effort to evolve a scheme of dominion constitution suitable for India's needs, but we deem it necessary that certain acts should be done and certain points should be cleared so as to inspire trust and ensure the co-operation of the principal political organizations in the country."

The conditions were: all discussions at the proposed conference to be on the basis of Dominion Status for India; there should be a predominant representation of Congressmen at the conference; a general amnesty of political prisoners; the Government of India to be carried on from now onwards, as far as possible, under existing conditions, on the lines of a dominion government.

The manifesto was signed among others by Gandhi, Malaviya, Motilal Nehru, Sapru, Mrs. Besant and Dr. Ansari. Jawaharlal Nehru first stood out as a dissentient but later agreed to sign it. Subhas Bose, Dr. Kitchlew and Maulana Abdul Bari declined to support the manifesto.

It was a triumph to get such a resolution agreed to by representatives of all groups, moderate and advanced. But the conditions in the resolution were looked upon from at least two different viewpoints. Congress leaders considered them to be essential and for them the conditions represented the minimum required. This was made clear by the Congress Working Committee, which further stated that this offer was limited to the date of the next Congress. For the moderate groups they were a desirable maximum which should be stated but which could not be insisted on at the point of refusal of co-operation.

The Viceroy's statement raised a storm in England. The Prime Minister, Mr. MacDonald, was forced to explain that it did not

mean any change of policy, or any speeding up of dominion status and the answer of Wedgwood Benn, Secretary of State for India, to the appeal for amnesty was an uncompromising negative. The British sympathizers, however, had been sending cables to Gandhi, asking him to reciprocate the gesture of the Labour Government. In reply Gandhi stated that he was "dying for co-operation":

"My non-co-operation is a token of my earnest longing for real heart co-operation in the place of co-operation falsely so called. I have, therefore, responded on the very first opportunity that offered itself. But I have meant every word of the joint manifesto as I have the now famous Calcutta resolution of the Congress. The two are in no sense contradictory. The letter of a document is nothing if the spirit of it is preserved intact. I can wait for the dominion status constitution, if I can get the real dominion status in action, if today, there is a real change of heart, a real desire on the part of the British people to see India a free and self-respecting nation and on the part of the officials in India a true spirit of service. This means substitution of the steel bayonet by that of the goodwill of the people. Are Englishmen and Englishwomen prepared to rely for the safety of their lives and property upon the goodwill of the people rather than upon their gun-mounted forts? If they are not yet ready, there is no dominion status that would satisfy me. My conception of dominion status implies present ability to sever the British connection if I wish to. Therefore, there can be no such thing as compulsion in the regulation of relations between Britain and India. If I choose to remain in the empire, it is to make the partnership a power for promoting peace and goodwill in the world, never to promote exploitation or what is known as Britain's imperialistic greed. It is highly likely that Labour Government has never meant all the implications mentioned by me. In my opinion I have not stretched the meaning of the manifesto in stating the implications. But whether the manifesto can bear the weight of these implications or not, it is due to the friends in England and in India that they should clearly realize my fundamental position. I am fully aware that India has not developed strength enough to assert the position here adumbrated. If, therefore, it is realized now it will be largely through the good grace of the British people. It will be nothing strange, if they exhibit it at the present juncture. It will be some reparation for the past wrongs done to India.

"If the time is not yet ripe for India to come to her own, I have patience enough to wait. I can work and live for no other goal. I recognize that mine is but the voice of an individual. How far it is representative of India's millions, no one can say. I certainly cannot."

Just prior to the Lahore Congress, a final attempt was made to find some basis of agreement between the Congress and the Government. An interview with the Viceroy was fixed for December 23. On that day, while Lord Irwin was returning to Delhi, a bomb explosion occurred on the railway line, but he escaped unhurt. Immediately after the Viceroy's return to Delhi, Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, Vithalbhai Patel, Tej Bahadur Sapru and Jinnah met him. The conference broke on the question of dominion status. "It was impossible for him or for His Majesty's Government in any way to pre-judge the action of the conference or to restrict the liberty of Parliament," stated the official communique. So now nothing remained for the Congress but to go ahead.

Commenting on the situation, Gandhi said: "There is so much violence in the atmosphere immediately surrounding us, politically-minded part of India, that a bomb thrown here and a bomb thrown there causes little perturbation and probably there is even joy over such an event in the hearts of some. If I did not know that this violence was like froth coming to the surface in an agitated liquid, I should despair of non-violence succeeding in the near future in giving us the freedom which we are all violently-minded and non-violently-minded people yearning for. Happily I have a certain belief based upon ceaseless experience during my tour in the heart of India for the past twelve months, that the vast masses who have become conscious of the fact that they must have freedom are untouched by the spirit of violence. In spite, therefore, of sporadic violent outbursts such as the bomb explosion under the Viceregal train, I feel that non-violence has come to stay.

"We are now entering upon a new era. Our immediate objective and not our distant goal is complete independence. Is it not obvious that if we are to evolve the true spirit of independence amongst the millions, we shall only do so through non-violence and all it implies? It is not enough that we drive out Englishmen by making their lives insecure through secret violence. That would lead not to independence but to utter confusion. We can establish independence

only by adjusting our differences through an appeal to the head and the heart, by evolving organic unity amongst ourselves, not by terrorizing or killing those who, we fancy, may impede our march, but by patient and gentle handling, by converting the opponent, we want to offer mass civil disobedience. Has it not often been demonstrated that mass civil disobedience is an impossibility without mass non-violence and without mass discipline? Surely it does not require an appeal to our religious faith to convince us that the necessity of our situation, if nothing else, demands non-violence of the limited type I have indicated. Let those who are not past reason then cease either secretly or openly to endorse activities such as this latest bomb outrage. Rather let them openly and heartily condemn these outrages, so that our deluded patriots may for want of nourishment to their violent spirit realize the futility of violence and the great harm that violent activity has every time done."

When the Congress met at Lahore during the Christmas Week, the atmosphere was tense. Among 30,000 spectators and delegates there was a large number from the N.-W. Frontier Province led by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan who had been for some years past attending and taking part in the Congress deliberations. The Ali brothers had since 1924 drifted farther and farther away from the Congress, and though they attended the Lahore Congress, they had done so only to warn Gandhi that the Muslims would not co-operate with the Congress in its campaign of civil disobedience. Dr. Ansari, who was all for the Congress, was also afraid of the consequences and, therefore, far from enthusiastic. So were some of the other Congress-minded Muslim leaders. But Azad threw his whole weight on the side of the Congress, and he had no doubt that the Muslim masses would respond to the freedom's call.

Motilal Nehru handed over his charge of presidentship to his son, Jawaharlal. In his presidential address, Jawaharlal declared himself a socialist and a republican and said: "Independence for us means complete freedom from British domination and British imperialism. Having attained our freedom, I have no doubt that India will welcome all attempts at world co-operation and federation, and will even agree to give up part of her own independence to a larger group of which she is an equal member."

Having been responsible for postponing the demand for independence at Calcutta, Gandhi sponsored the main resolution, which

*inter alia* declared that the word swaraj in the first article of the Congress constitution shall mean Complete Independence. The operative portion of the resolution was: "That nothing is to be gained in the existing circumstances by the Congress being represented at the proposed Round Table Conference. As a preliminary step towards organizing a campaign of independence and in order to make the Congress policy as consistent as possible with the change of creed, this Congress resolves upon complete boycott of the legislatures and committees constituted by the Government and calls upon the Congressmen and others taking part in the national movement to abstain from participating, in future elections and directs the present members of the legislatures to resign their seats. This Congress appeals to the nation zealously to prosecute the contructive programme of the Congress and authorizes the All-India Congress Committee, wherever it deems fit, to launch upon a programme of civil disobedience, including non-payment of taxes, whether in selected areas or otherwise and under such safeguards as it may consider necessary."

Gandhi characterized this resolution as the root of the future Congress work.

The debate on the main resolution waxed long, not because there were many dissensions as far as the goal was concerned, but because there were many who did not like the references made to the Viceroy in the resolution and the details of the programme as suggested by Gandhi. The discussion ended at ten in the night of December 31. Voting took another two hours; there were as many as fourteen amendments and several of them were pressed. The resolution on independence and the action to be taken in furtherance of the struggle, was passed almost unanimously, barely a score of persons, out of many thousands, voting against it. At the stroke of midnight, on December 31, the resolution was declared carried and exactly at that hour the ultimatum given at Calcutta expired. At midnight, as 1930 ushered in, the flag of Indian independence, the Tricolour, was unfurled, to the deafening shouts of "Inquilab Zindabad", "Long Live Revolution".

The resolutions of the Congress strictly followed the trend of the presidential address. The entire scheme of the Nehru Report was declared to have lapsed. Purna Swaraj, Complete Independence, was declared as the aim of the Congress. The resolution on the

communal question assured the minorities that no solution would be accepted which did not give full satisfaction to the parties concerned. The Congress declared that every obligation inherited by independent India would be strictly subject to investigation and unjust concessions and obligations would be repudiated. The Congress put on record its appreciation of supreme self-sacrifice of Jatin Das and deplored the bombing of the Viceregal train and congratulated Lord Irwin and party "including the poor servants" on their escape. The resolution on bomb was hotly discussed but ultimately it was passed. The clause relating to the boycott of the local bodies in the main resolution was not accepted by the Subjects Committee. Gandhi gave in. "The Congress is not an organization to enunciate theories but to anticipate national wants and wishes, and forge practical sanctions for their fulfilment."

The Liberal Conference that met in Madras issued a manifesto, calling upon all parties to combine together for the purpose of securing a constitution based on dominion status. Sastri, supporting the appeal, referred to the Lahore Congress and said: "There can be no doubt that we are confronted in the political history of India with a crisis almost unparalleled."

## *Glossary*

Abhishekam, anointment ; sprinkling of water on deity.
Abvabs, a kind of cess.
Ahimsa, non-violence.
Akhada, physical culture institute.
Allah-O-Akbar, God is great.
Anushthanam, practice of religious rites.
Arati, a waving of lamps ; a form of worship.
Archana, worship.
Ardhanga, better half; wife.
Ashram, a hermitage ; a place for study and discipline of life.
Aulia, a Muslim saint.
Avatar, an incarnation of God.
Ayat, a verse in the Koran.
Azadi, independence.
Azan, a call to Muslim prayer.
Bande Mataram, Hail Mother ; the refrain of the Indian national anthem known by the same name.
Bania, a trader.
Bapu, father.
Begar, forced labour.
Bhakta, a devotee.
Bhakti, devotion.
Bhandar, stores ; a shop.
Bhangi, scavenger.
Bharat Mata, Mother India.
Bharat Mata-ki-jai, victory to Mother India.
Borodada, eldest brother.
Brahmachari, one observing continence.
Brahmacharya, continence.

Brahman, the Absolute ; one universal essence ; the Supreme Soul of the Vedanta philosophy.

Brahmavidya, knowledge of the Supreme Spirit.

Chaddar, a sheet worn as a wrap by men and women.

Chamar, an untouchable caste ; leather worker.

Chandal, a pariah who lives by scavenging and hunting ; an out-caste.

Chapati, thin flat cakes made of wheat flour ; bread.

Charkha, a spinning wheel.

Chiku, a kind of fruit.

Daridranarayan, God in the form of the indigent and poor.

Darshan, sight of a venerated person or deity.

Deshbandhu, friend of the country.

Deti leti, dowry system as known in Sind.

Devadasi, a female dedicated to the service of gods or a temple ; a courtesan.

Dewan, prime minister of Indian state.

Dharma, duty ; religion.

Dhed, a sweeper caste ; an untouchable.

Dhobi, a washerman.

Dubla, an untouchable caste of Gujarat.

Duragraha, insistence on wrongdoing or untruth ; as opposed to satyagraha.

Durbar, ruler's court.

Ezhava, prosperous and educated untouchable caste.

Fakir, a Muslim ascetic.

Fatwa, a decree of Muslim divines.

Gayatri, an invocation of sun-god ; a mantra recited by the twice-born Hindus.

Ghat, bathing place on the bank of a river or tank.

Gopi, milkmaid.

Gosevak, a person dedicated to the service of the cow ; worshipper of the cow.

Goshala, cow-shed.

Guna, quality ; attribute. There are three attributes that may be predicated of all existing things, namely, *satva* (goodness or purity), *rajas* (passion or activity), *tamas* (darkness or stolidity).

Gurudwara, a Sikh temple.

Hari bol, utterance of the name of god Hari.

Hartal, a strike.
Himsa, violence.
Inquilab Zindabad, Long Live Revolution.
Ishwar, Creator ; Supreme Personal God.
Jai, victory.
Jam-i-jam, the Universal Provider.
Janmashtami, the birthday of Krishna.
Japa, repeating of prayers.
Jazirat-ul-Arab, holy region of Arabia.
Ji, an affix added to names denoting respect, e.g., Gandhiji.
Jnani, wise.
Kachrapati, scavenging department.
Kalipuja, worship of the goddess Kali.
Kaliyuga, fourth age of the world—the age of universal degeneracy.
Kalma, basic Muslim prayer.
Kalpadrum, the Universal Provider.
Karma, action ; retribution.
Karmabhumi, the land of action ; land where realization is sought through action.
Karma Yoga, doctrine of detached action.
Khaddar or Khadi, hand-woven cloth from hand-spun yarn.
Khilaf, against.
Khilafat, suzerainty of Caliph.
Khuda, Muslim name for God.
Kulapati, chancellor.
Kum-kum, red ochre ; auspicious vermilion mark put on the forehead.
Kurbani, sacrifice ; offering.
Lokamanya, respected by the people.
Lota, a small metal water-pot.
Lungi, a waist-cloth.
Mahajan, a merchant or banker.
Maharaja, king.
Maharani, queen.
Mahatma, a great soul.
Mandir, a temple.
Mangal mala, beads worn by a woman whose husband is living ; a token of luck for a married woman.
Mantra, a sacred formula or incantation.

Maulana, a Muslim divine.
Maulvi, a Muslim priest.
Maya, illusion.
Mohant, custodian of a temple.
Mukti, emancipation ; liberation.
Nagar, town.
Nama rupa, name and form.
Neti neti, the Vedantic doctrine of "not this, not this."
Nirvana, nothingness ; release from the cycle of rebirth ; supreme bliss.
Om, Hindu mystic syllable.
Paisa, a pice ; a copper coin.
Panchama, belonging to the fifth caste ; an outcaste.
Panchayat, a village council of five elected members ; a council of village elders.
Pandit or pundit, a learned Hindu teacher ; a prefix to certain Brahmin family names, e.g., Pandit Nehru.
Pariah, outcaste.
Pasos and temeins, Burmese dress.
Patel, a village headman.
Phoongyi, a Buddhist monk.
Pinjrapole, shelter for crippled and aged cows.
Pranam, salutation.
Prasadam, food offered to idols, or the remnants of such food.
Purdah, veil ; the custom of keeping women in seclusion or under a veil.
Purdanashin, a woman observing purdah.
Purna, full ; complete.
Purnima, full-moon day.
Raghupati Raghava Raja Ram, etc., a hymn in praise of Rama.
Raj, rule.
Rajas, passion or activity. See also *guna*.
Ramalila, action play of Rama.
Ramanam, the name of god Rama.
Ram Raj, kingdom of Rama ; beneficent rule.
Rishi, a seer.
Ryot, an Indian peasant.
Sadhu, a virtuous man leading the life of an ascetic ; an ascetic.
Salam, salutation.

Sammelan, a conference.
Sanatani, orthodox Hindu.
Sangathan, organization.
Sanyasa, renunciation of worldly life.
Sanyasi, one who has renounced the worldly life ; a recluse.
Sardar, nobleman; an honorofic term, e.g., Sardar Patel.
Sari, a long piece of cloth worn as outer garment by Indian women.
Sarkar, government ; authority.
Satva, goodness or purity. See also *guna.*
Satyagraha, " a force which is born of truth and love or non-violence "; tenacious clinging to truth ; civil or non-violent resistance.
Satyagrahi, one practising satyagraha.
Sepoy, a policeman.
Shamiana, a canopy.
Shanti, peace.
Shastras, religious law books of the Hindus.
Shastri, one conversant in shastras.
Shloka, verse.
Shraddha, Hindu ceremony in memory of the dead.
Shuddhi, re-conversion.
Smriti, that which is remembered and handed down by tradition, includes the three portions of the Vedas.
Stridhan, a woman's private property over which she exercises independent control.
Subnum, a variety of superfine muslin cloth—hand-spun and hand-woven.
Swadeshi, manufacture of one's own country.
Swami, a monk.
Swaraj, self-government ; self-rule.
Swarajist, member of the Swaraj Party; one who demands swaraj.
Tabarruk, food offered to idols, or the remnants of such food.
Tabligh, religious propaganda and conversion as practised by the Muslims.
Tahsil, sub-division of a district.
Talati, a village accountant.
Taluk, a revenue division.
Tamas, darkness or stolidity. See also *guna.*
Tapascharya or Tapasya, penance ; austerity.

Temeins, see pasos.
Thana, a police station.
Tirtha, a holy place.
Tola, a weight equivalent to 180 grains.
Topi, a cap.
Ulu, an utterance of welcome on auspicious occasion.
Vaishnava, a devotee of Vishnu.
Vakil, pleader ; lawyer.
Varna, caste.
Varnashram, the four castes and stages of life sanctioned by the Hindu religion.
Vedavadarata, one occupied with the literary discussion of the Vedas.
Vidyalaya, a school.
Vidyapith, a college.
Virya, vital essence.
Walla, a man.
Yajna, religious sacrifice.
Yoga, intense concentration on one subject.
Yogi, one who practises yoga.
Zamindar, landlord.

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